BING

Spring
2014

No. 166

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::

(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins

(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

Warm spring greetings to all of my fellow ICC members and associates. When it comes time to putting some thoughts together each issue for these editorials, it always becomes painfully apparent at how quickly the years are rolling by. Especially when it's the first message of the New Year. But, as George Burns so eloquently once said, "you can't help growing older, but you don't have to grow old". Wise words to ponder.

2014 marks the 70th anniversary of one of Bing's most beloved films, *Going My Way*. It would be a wonderful gift for all of us if Universal Home Entertainment would see fit to remaster this classic and issue it in Blu-ray format. Looking back, I see I pondered this very thing exactly one year ago. Let's hope this is the year it finally happens. But that's just one of many such worthy candidates. The 60th anniversary of *The Country Girl* also takes place this year. And just think what *High Society* would look like in Blu-ray format! Not to mention *Holiday Inn*, or *Road to Morocco* or *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. I've been a longtime fan of the high definition format, and within the past year, Malcolm has also been suitably impressed with the Blu-ray issues of *White Christmas*, *High Time*, and *The Bells of St. Mary's*. We both would love to see more. I know many of you would as well.

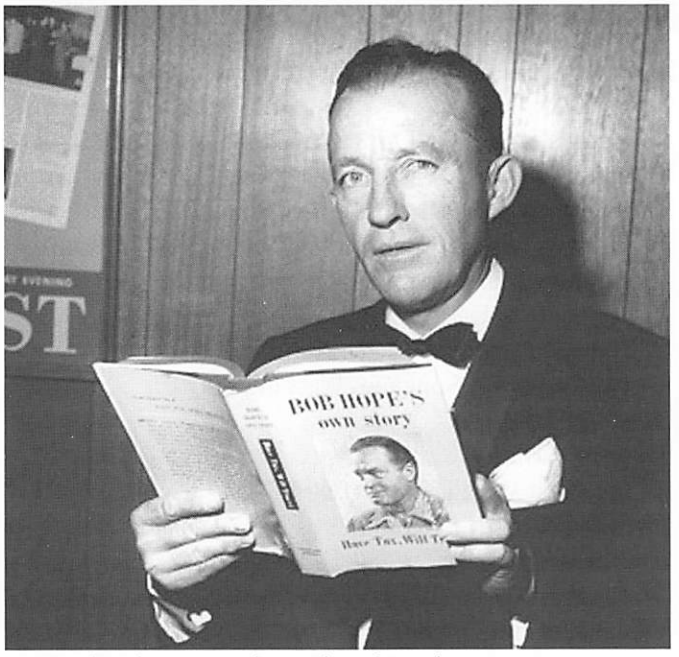
OK, enough of the left over Christmas wish list, time to get down to the business at hand...what to expect in the new issue of BING which you are currently holding. Malcolm will have all of the specific details in his usual fine fashion. One of the highlights, for me anyhow, was a rather lengthy interview I conducted by phone with our honorary member Regis Philbin, who appeared as a guest on my radio program. As you will soon read, Regis has nothing but high praise for our man and this publication.

Before I hand the baton over to Malcolm, let me once again remind members in the United States and Canada, if you haven't already done so, be sure to send your ICC membership dues for 2014 to Wig as soon as possible to ensure you won't miss a single issue. I know he will be most grateful for your prompt attention and consideration.

Greg Van Beek **tvanbeek@execpc.com**

Thanks Greg and again we have a packed magazine for you with articles that cover many facets of Bing's life. We go from his childhood in Spokane through to his final years and beyond.

I suppose that we Crosby supporters (as Bing liked to call us) are always impatient for new additions to our collections and hopefully we shall have news of the next CD and DVD issues from Bing Crosby Enterprises soon.



I wonder how much each of us have spent on our collections over the years? I daren't try to add it up – my wife would threaten divorce! But I am sure we are all looking forward to spending yet more on Bing in the coming months.

Many of you have been asking about Gary Giddins' second volume about our man and we have an update for you on a subsequent page.

It is a real pleasure to report that our Honorary President, **Kathryn Crosby,** has been performing again in New York. Martin McQuade was there and has sent us a report on what seems to have been a very enjoyable evening. We have an interesting article about Harry Crosby and there is news of Bing's grandson Phil Jr. and of his nephew Chris Crosby. An important legal case involving the Crosby family has been settled and the details are given later in this issue.

All of the regular contributors are with us again with the exception of Gord Atkinson who will be back in the summer. Martin McQuade has uncovered a hitherto unknown short film featuring baseball legend Ted Williams and Bing which can be viewed on the Internet.

A suggestion was made some issues ago that we were not having enough articles catering for collectors and in this issue we have a contribution from Crosby Collector extraordinaire, John Newton, as well as a look at 78 collecting in Australia.

Plenty to write about in "Bing on the Box" this time but sadly the obituaries section of the magazine remains enlarged as contemporaries of Bing pass on.

Our front and back covers show Bing when he was filming *Emperor Waltz*. Now that's another film that would look good in the Blu-ray format too!

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

CONTENTS

Page Nos.

Editorial 3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report. 4
Gary Giddins 5
If Music Be The Food Of Love, Play On 6
Road to happiness - Me and my MBA 7
Bing Crosby – The Truth Behind The Legend 8
Straight Down the Middle 9
Stage show recreates Hope-Crosby radio magic . . 10
Tony Jacobs - The Bing Crosby Years 10
A Conversation with Regis Philbin 11
Bing at Home in Spokane, Washington 16
Trading Post 20
Books 'n' Bing 22
Bing's First Wife Denied His Publicity Rights . . . 24
Celluloid Crosby 26
The Look of Love 29
Walt's First Park 30
One Sweet Letter from You 33
Ken Crossland's "Crosbyana" 36
John Newton - Crosby Collector 38
Record Collectors' Nightmares 41
Bing on the Box 42
Once in a While 47
The Way We Were 50
Keeping Track 53

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

It is a real pleasure to commence my report with a commendation to all those members who have given generous additional support to the ICC during the past year. Members may wish to consult the accounts and observe that we could not have met our commitments in 2013 without the donations provided by our beneficent members.

Conversely, it is disappointing to record that, as has become the norm, more than 25% of our members did not renew on time and around 200 reminder letters had to be sent to them at a considerable cost to the club. Suggestions on how to solve this problem would be welcome!

The *Bing Sings for the Armed Forces Radio Service* CD has been very well received by members and we apologise to any member who did not receive an insert in the last issue announcing this release.

Meanwhile, I thank all of the ICC team for their dedicated work during 2013 and we look forward to another good year this time around.

BING calendar

In our winter issue, 2012 (#162), we gave the disappointing news that the 2013 calendar would be our last because falling orders were making it uneconomic. With hindsight, we missed a trick by not including a reminder about the ending of our calendar project in our last issue. As a result, all of the club's officers have been receiving queries asking what has happened to the 2014 edition!

One of our most loyal members, Judy Wysokowski of Syracuse, New York, was so disappointed not to have received a 2014 calendar that she went to her calendar collection and after considerable research discovered that the ICC's Centenary Calendar of 2003 has exactly the same arrangement of months and weekdays as 2014. So she has returned her 2003 calendar to the dedicated place on her wall for this year. So if you still have a copy of the 2003 calendar in your Crosby collection, you know what to do!

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that their association with the club will bring them much interest and enjoyment.

UNITED STATES

William Avorio (Tinley Park, Illinois), Windy Davidson (Martinsville, Virginia), Steven Joens (Highland, Indiana), Ron McBride (Olathe, Kansas), Mike McCrann (West Hollywood, California).

CANADA

John Dyer (Scarborough, Ontario), Dave Odell (Wetaskiwin, Alberta).

ENGLAND

Jim Arnold (London SE23)

DONATIONS

As I have said before, the ICC is very fortunate to have generous benefactors who consistently support the club with their financial contributions and we are pleased to acknowledge exceptional gifts received from **Edward Broadley** of Leeds and from **Sheila Rainey** who gifted a legacy on behalf of her late sister **Jean.**

These kind gifts are supported by generous contributions from the following members:-

Paul Hennessey, Frank Startup, Peter Richmond, Donald Bostock, Harry C Ross, Derrick Carter, Matthew Sprott, Derek Meaden, Roger Addey, Bob Halls, Lew Grassby, Peter E. Rossiter, Ken Shaw, Doreen Hubbard, Geoff Robinson, Bert Bishop, Robert Sharpe, Derek Perkins, Frank Challenger, Gwen Harvey, Barbara Holmes, Tom Sim, John Bignell, Nicolas Morrison, Peter Jeffrey, John Stiles, Michael Haefner, Jack Wingrad, Frans van der Kolff, Michael Portley, Frank Thompson, Charles Wilkinson, Tom Wallace, Barbara Sellers, Stan Woodford, R. W. Bendelow, Klaus Halm, Gillian Stenning, Des Cusack, Arthur Blood, Colin

Collindridge, Gordon Manton, Kenneth Heason, Mike Mansley, Geoff White, Margaret North and George Patmore.

The donation from Gwen Harvey was in memory of her friend, former ICC member Paula Sangster, who passed away earlier this year. Due to holiday commitments my report is being prepared very early so I may miss commenting on some valuable contributions and I will return to these in the summer issue. Donations from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand will be acknowledged in the next issue too.

To all who give additional and generous gifts to the ICC we extend our sincere thanks.

DEATHS

Members will also be saddened to learn, as I am, that we have lost so many of the following loyal supporters to the Grim Reaper during the past year. We shall miss them and their contributions to the ICC.

Rev. Michael Collins (Port Orange, Florida), Tad Burness (Pacific Grove, California), Richard Heman (Phoenix, Arizona), John Shaw (Novato, California), Don Peri (Davis, California), Robert Stagnaro (Santa Cruz, California), Geraldine Hewson (Los Angeles, California), Jim Roche (82) (South Shields, Tyne & Wear), Frank Burton (87) (Horton Heath, Hants), Ernest Smith (85) (Dumfries), George Wilson (Beith, Ayrshire), Edwin Cox (Bristol), Geoff Dorran (Glasgow).

The **Rev. Michael Collins** was a generous benefactor to the ICC and he wrote several excellent articles for the magazine over the years. **Jim Roche** was a jovial supporter of the ICC and he attended the Leeds meeting until latterly, when his health was not too good. **Edwin Cox** was a gently spoken member from Bristol and I will miss his regular phone calls to discuss his great love of Bing's music.

We extend our sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of the above

BING CROSBY ON CD

This is my usual reminder that the following attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £8.50 and the rest of the world £9.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 10

BING CROSBY in the Hall – Rare Live Recordings from KMH 1937 – 1946

BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors

BING CROSBY sings for the ARMED FORCES RADIO SERVICE

LEEDS 2014 (49th meeting)

Sunday October 5th is the date for your diary

My warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton
mdcrampton@gmail.com

Gary Giddins

Back in January, there were a number of comments seen on the Internet suggesting that volume 2 of Gary's book about Bing was never going to be published and there were various suggestions as to why this was so.

In view of this, your editor has been in contact with Gary. It seems that the publication date was moved by

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2013

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions	7161	Production of BING magazine	11580
Donations	3435	Calendars	2
Legacy – Jean Rainey	500	AGM (Leeds) costs	796
Sales - Calendars	662	Secretarial costs	436
Leeds meeting - receipts	808	Sepia CDs - costs	4179
Sales – Books / back issues	51	Editorial costs	100
Sales – Sepia CDs	3356	Postage – books/back issues	33
		Returned cheques	29
Bank balance 31/12/2012	15680	Bank balance 31/12/2013	14498
	31653		31653

Note:

1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary. Amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2014.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

the publisher because the publisher determined it had 'too many biographies coming to the market at the same time'. Gary will share a new date with us via his website as soon as it becomes definite. All very frustrating for all concerned but in the meantime, it has given him extra time to tie up additional pieces of the story. The 'loss of interest' and 'refusing an e-book version' comments on the Internet are so far from the truth as to be laughable. Gary has now shared a brief excerpt from his book with me and this is certainly mouth-watering! Incredible research has thrown up new facts and clarified other stories. It has been a long wait for volume 2 but take it from me, it's going to be worth it.

If Music Be The Food Of Love, Play On
(William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*)

Martin McQuade was there when our Honorary President, Kathryn Crosby, presented her *Twelfth Night* show in January and he tells us all about it.

Hopes are high on the feast of The Epiphany that you may receive that one outstanding gift which makes the holiday complete - that one "Gift of the Magi" which allows you to relive the glow first felt during the luminous early days of December. Those in attendance at The Bruno Walter Auditorium of The New York Public Library for The Performing Arts located at Lincoln Center this January 6th were not disappointed. A hint of the delightful evening at hand, entitled *Celebrate 12th Night Joyfully with Kathryn Crosby,* appeared on the cover of the program.

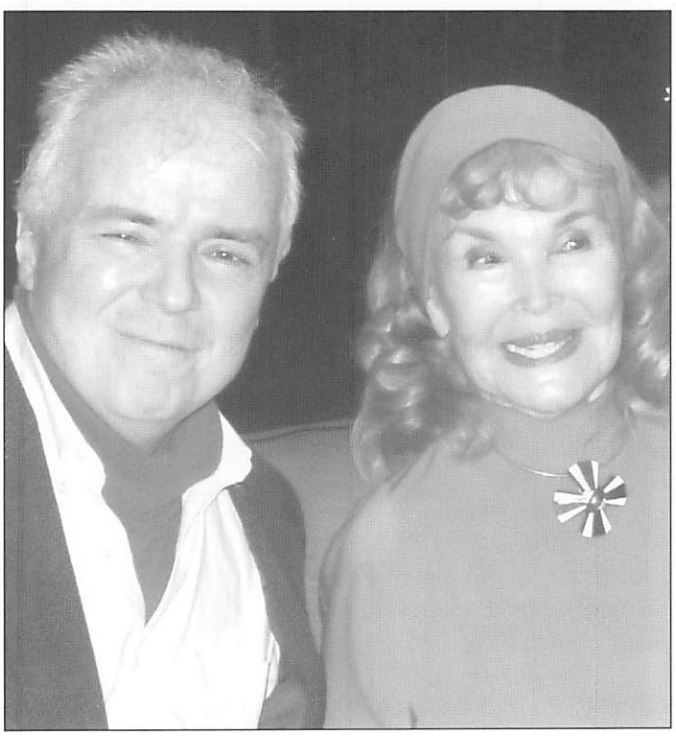
> *Infused with a warmth that is pure Kathryn Crosby, we are taken on the journey that is her life; from present day, back to the moment she met Bing Crosby, the highs and lows, the tragedies and triumphs, through song and story we get a rare glimpse inside the life of this amazing woman.*

Those settling in their seats were treated to familiar images from Kathryn's various books which were projected onto a screen, accompanied by audio selections from recent Bing Crosby releases. Once the lights dimmed, strains of Kathryn singing "Never Never Land" from the long ago Hollywood Palace of Dec. 24, 1966 merged into a live rendering by the star, radiantly dressed in red.

"…Just think of lovely things and your heart will fly on wings…" The lyric was underscored by her introduction of her grandchildren, Nicholas and Thea, whose father, Harry Crosby, looked on from the front row. The wistfulness of the song prompted Kathryn to offer her gratitude to producer Bill Harbach, co-producer of *The Hollywood Palace,* for helping to create the venue which launched the legendary Crosby Family Christmas shows. She mused, "How the time has flown since then," barely stifling a sob.

Very soon the dreamy landscapes of *Peter Pan* gave way to the gritty and confessional mood of Stephen Sondheim's "I'm Still Here." This song, with its defiant message of "good times and bad times, I've seen them all and I'm here, I'm still here" was especially resonant since it served to demonstrate Kathryn's extraordinary resilience in the face of a devastating car accident in late 2010. Upon ending the introspective ballad Kathryn shared with her audience the seemingly insurmountable physical and emotional losses suffered during that disaster, and the immense travails of her recovery. "I was all shook up – all broke up – I was a mess. I learned very quickly that rehabilitation is not for sissies." This led into a brilliant stroke of cabaret storytelling, weaving the self pity of "Little Girl Blue" into the shiny optimism of "Blue Skies" while nimbly detailing the courageous journey which Kathryn has recently undertaken. Her supple voice, brimming with truth and devoid of frills, lends proof to her transcendence.

Kathryn continued with an account of another life altering moment. "Everything changed when Bing died on a golf course in Spain. I decided to go back to the theater." Many stage appearances ensued, including a visit to the Soviet Union to star in *The Seagull* in a role which necessitated spending 18 hour days with a Russian tutor. ("I got away with it!") All of this experience made her 1995 Broadway debut in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *State Fair* "a lead pipe cinch," thanks, in no small part, to the support of her co-star Donna McKechnie, who was graciously asked to take a bow from the audience.



Martin McQuade meets up with Kathryn at the show.

Kathryn confessed that the lure of Broadway was compelling but when all was said and done she "needed

to be at sea level, in the house where my children had grown up." One particularly cherished artifact "was waiting for me in the drawing room - the 1890 grand piano which Bing used in *High Society*." Indeed, the importance of tradition in the Crosby household was emphasized by that most redemptive of songs, "Everything Old Is New Again," sung here in a solo turn as opposed to the familiar duet with Bing, the clip of which Kathryn has frequently featured in her engagements. The nostalgic theme was enhanced by the "Jingle Bells" segment from the final family special, *Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas* which spurred a sentimental observation. "We had no idea that this was going to be our last Christmas together. You never know how much time you're going to have with each other. Time moves forward, with us and eventually without us."

This gave way to a rendering of the verse of "I'll Be Seeing You" with its sentimental line, "who knows when we shall meet again/out when the morning chimes ring sweet again" blending seamlessly into Bing's recording of the chorus.

The entire show had a captivating intimacy thanks to the cheery accompaniment of Kathryn's vocal coach Shannon Day, whom the program describes as "fascinated with the healing abilities of music." Shannon occasionally joined Kathryn on her vocals. The brisk direction of Marcelo Pereira allowed us to feel that we were privileged guests at a marvelous party, such as when Kathryn confided some of her musical roots. "I always wanted to be a jazz singer, but there isn't much of that in West Columbia, Texas. I wanted to be an Ella, Pearl, Rosie or Judy." She then invited the audience to sing along with two optimistic evergreens, each replete with verse: "Over the Rainbow" and "Pennies from Heaven."

The familiar details of Kathryn and Bing's courtship and marriage were told. "Bing was just your ordinary, run of the mill super star," she said, adding that he possessed "a warm and friendly voice which Louis Armstrong said was 'like gold poured into a cup.'"

When Bing uttered to the Paramount "Golden Circle" starlet, "Hey Tex, what's your hurry," she remembered that "my toes froze." When Bing invited her for a cup of tea, she recalled, "I looked in his big blue eyes and that night I shivered in my bed." The road to romance admittedly led to a detour to Spain via *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad.* But the uncertainties as expressed in "It's All Right with Me" were overcome with a tenderly sung antidote: "Fifty Percent" from one of Bing's favorite musicals, *Ballroom.*

"Life is anyone's guess/It's a constant surprise/though you don't plan to fall in love when you fall, you fall/I'd rather have fifty percent of him, or any percent of him/than all of anybody else at all."

Valentines to their children were offered, by way of "All the Things You Are" and "Fly Me to the Moon;" and a pledge of unwavering devotion was made to her many grandchildren, courtesy of Stephen Sondheim's "Not While I'm Around."

The evening's fare concluded with the highly anticipated finale of the Yuletide season. Kathryn sang the verse, which beautifully melded into Bing's last rendition of "White Christmas." The audience sang along and then shouted, "Encore!" Kathryn obliged with "Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive" and then "I'm Beginning to See the Light." Reflecting the lyric of that tune, Kathryn caused far more than a spark. An incandescent star rekindled the spirit of Christmas, proving it need not be calendar - bound.

When wild geese of autumn fly – will you?
When hearth fires of winter die – will you?
Time rushes by – memories fade - dreams never do
I will be ever true – will you?

From "Will You" from *Grey Gardens* by Scott Frankel and performed by Kathryn Crosby in her *Twelfth Night* show.

Martin McQuade

Road to happiness - Me and my MBA

An interesting article by Nick Dalton in *The Times* on October 9 last year focused on Harry Crosby.

Bing Crosby's son fulfilled a dream when he became a banker.

Harry Crosby had a showbiz life mapped out. By the age of 22, the son of Bing Crosby had toured with his father, studied at drama school in London and starred in the horror movie *Friday the 13th.* Yet he says, "I didn't have a burning desire to be an actor or an entertainer." What he really wanted to be was an investment banker.

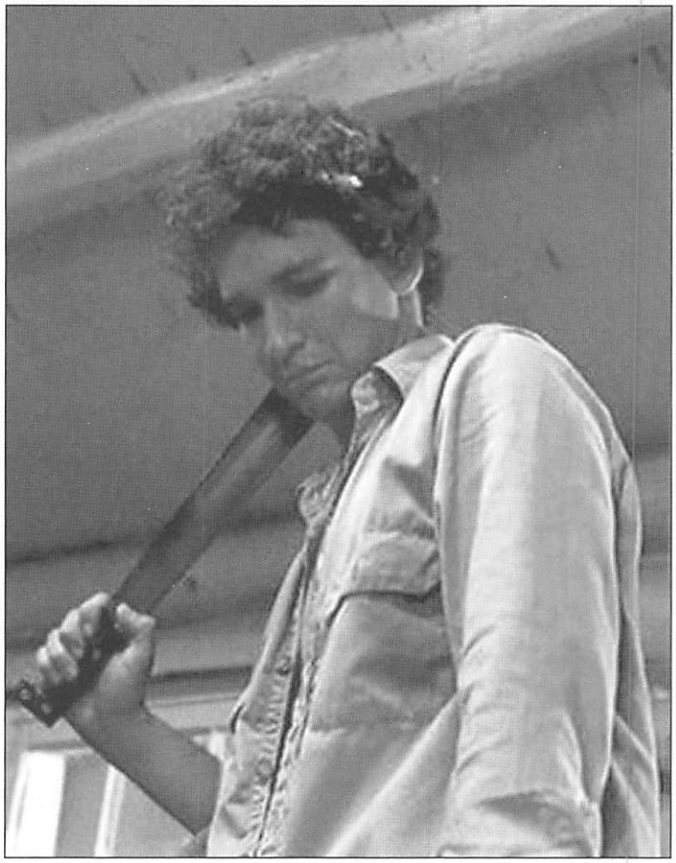
So he enrolled on an MBA course. Now 33 years on, he is partner in a Wall Street private equity firm, although he still occasionally appears on stage.

Crosby, 55, grew up in a Hollywood whirl. His mother, Kathryn – who Bing met while filming *White Christmas* – had starred in films including *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad.* Bob Hope, who starred with Bing in the series of *Road* films, was a family friend.

Crosby, a talented guitarist with a "disregard" for regular lessons, was studying at CalArts, the Disney sponsored academy in Los Angeles, when he took time out. "I toured in 1976 and 1977 with my dad and Rosemary Clooney. We played all over the UK, with three or four weeks at the London Palladium each summer."

The shows featured the rest of the family including sister Mary – who played Kristin Shepard, the woman who shot JR in *Dallas* – and culminated in Bing's final concert at the Brighton Centre, four days before his fatal heart attack in Spain.

Crosby had just decided to continue his education in England, passing an anonymous audition at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (Lamda), then inviting the dean to see him perform at the Palladium. "I spent three years in London," he says. "I loved it, lived in South Ken, toured the provinces in a period piece." In his final year he won a role in *Friday the 13th* (alongside Kevin Bacon), yet was unsure about his future.



Harry in *Friday the 13th*.

"When I came back to the States, even while gainfully employed as a thespian, I still applied for business school. I had always wanted to do it," he says. "Lamda wasn't exactly an accredited college – I had not got a solid undergraduate base, like going to the LSE or Oxford – but the graduate schools were open-minded. They said do well in the application, take calculus, statistics and a couple of other courses to show you can handle the quantitative side."

After narrowing it down to Columbia and Fordham business schools, both in New York, he chose the latter because its structure made it possible to join at the start of any term. He began immediately but still moonlighted as an actor. "I got roles, but I always had one eye on investment banking. Instead of doing a summer programme in the workforce, I went straight through and got the MBA."

Interviews followed, but the likes of Goldman Sachs wanted someone with a more conventional approach. "Someone who had done a summer internship, a two-year analyst programme. I had none of those. I could barely spell investment banking."

Crosby joined a small company, Prudential-Bache Securities, and proved a success. He was lured away by Lehman Brothers, where he spent seven years, moving to Credit Suisse before heading the financial sponsors group at Merrill Lynch. Last year he co-founded Cranemere, a private equity firm specialising in investments in middle market companies.

He believes his father's business sense inspired his career change. Bing used his wealth wisely, building the Del Mar horse racing track in California, owning the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team and financing fledging tape-to-tape technology, which powered the entertainment industry until the digital era. But, says Crosby, "I really felt that I needed the experience and the tools that were given to me at business school. It gave me confidence to play in an arena I was unfamiliar with."

Never far from music, Crosby supports trumpeter Wynton Marsalis's Jazz at Lincoln Centre charity. He is also using his experience to increase awareness of his father's work. "My dad made a lot of recordings and I have taken a great interest, not so much for the financial interest as to preserve his legacy," he says.

Eleven albums with lavish packaging and bonus tracks have been re-released, including 'Seasons', recorded in London on Bing's final visit. "We have 3,000 titles – radio shows, Christmas shows, private recordings – and we are trying to put all that together," he says.

He knows that he will need all his business administration skills for that vast project.

Nick Dalton

Bing Crosby – The Truth Behind The Legend

Back in December, a link to kickstarter.com threw up a Crosby project seeking funds. Kickstarter is a fairly new way to fund creative projects and is a home for everything from films, games, and music to art, design, and technology. Kickstarter is full of projects, big and small, that are brought to life through the direct support of the public. Since the launch in 2009, 5.3 million people have pledged $904 million, funding 52,000 creative projects. The filmmakers, musicians, artists, and designers on Kickstarter have complete control over and responsibility for their projects. Kickstarter is a platform and a resource; it is not involved in the development of the projects themselves. Anyone can launch a project on Kickstarter as long as it meets the guidelines.

Chris Crosby (aged 71), Bob Crosby's son, had this to say about his project "Bing Crosby – the Truth Behind The Legend" which was seeking $50,000 to finish it off.

"For 35 years I've been filming and documenting the life story of my Uncle and Godfather, Bing

Crosby. This will set the record straight..."

The publicity continued as follows:

This is a Bing Crosby story that reveals the real Bing, with all his faults and foibles. A story that has emerged through 36 years of research by his nephew and godson, Chris Crosby, as he explored the archives and interviewed at length, the friends and family and stars who knew Bing the best. These stories were only revealed to Chris because he was family, and he got the whole truth... over 40 hours of interviews.

Chris developed a new view of Bing and the complicated emotions that drove him. He was a Superstar before the word Superstar was even invented. He lived by a code amidst great personal strife. It wasn't easy... his first wife Dixie Lee was an alcoholic and died in a coma. He was a legend and the press was always gunning for him. A private man... very few people knew the real Bing.

The real truth is revealed about Bing's oldest son Gary, his drinking and anger toward his famous father and his motivation for writing the tell-all book, "Going My Own Way"... including Gary's shocking death bed confession to author Gary Giddins recanting his accusations against Bing. Turns out Bing was a good father after all and Chris Crosby finally sets the record straight. In fact, he was not only helpful to family but many celebrity friends told Chris that Bing was responsible for their success as well.

Bing built four churches, started Del Mar race track, owned the Pittsburgh Pirates, oil fields and orange groves. Bing Crosby laboratories were involved in the development of Ampex audio tape and video tape. He's won Grammys, Emmys, Oscars and is still a million selling artist annually. He's been called by his peers: "the biggest star of the 20th Century".

Interview clips with the following celebrities have been completed by and include Chris Crosby, Bob Crosby, Bon Hope, Phil Harris, Rich Little, Rhonda Fleming, Jane Wyman, Patty Andrews, Anthony Quinn, Sammy Cahn, Stewart Granger, Mary Martin, Victor Borge, Mel Tormé, Donald O'Connor, Suzzie Crosby, Arleen Crosby, Cathy Crosby, Gary Giddins, Kitty Carlisle, Ken Barnes, Kitty Good and Terry Moore, to name but a few...

To date, over $200,000 of priceless footage has been shot by Chris... all contain personal stories and intimate information about Bing and Bob, things never before revealed. The best moments of these interviews will be used throughout the docudrama, both on camera and voice-over.

To finish the project, funds are being sought for dramatic recreations, still to be filmed and post production editing, mastering, color and sound correction, film clips and music licensing.

From the film's producer, Bing Crosby's nephew and Godson, Chris Crosby:

One thing I've learned from being in show business since the age of 12 is that "it's never the movie you started out to make"... and this is especially true for me and my search for the truth about my Uncle Bing. More than just a project, it's a responsibility to my family and its name and a 36 year labor of love. The successful marketing of this or any film involves the bankability of the project and its stars. Bing has never lost a dime for anybody in show business. I am confident that with the entertainment industry connections I've established through the years and a strong internet presence, we have an excellent shot at reaching our goal. Be a part of show business history.

Chris Crosby

****

On his Facebook page, Chris Crosby is described as a singer, entertainer, musician, artist, sculptor and all around fun guy. Other than that, we know very little about him. The appeal for funds lasted from November 15 until December 31 but only $1384 was pledged by 15 backers towards the $50,000 required. We assume that the project will not now proceed.

One of the interviews Chris gave to publicise his appeal was on the Skip E. Lowe cable TV show and this can be found on YouTube. Talking about Gary Crosby's book, Chris said:

> "Did you know that there were two books? The first one he turned into the publisher, the publisher turned down because there wasn't enough dirt in it. He told Gary go back and manufacture some dirt....So Gary went back and put more dirt in it and the publisher published the book. When the other three brothers found out about it, they were furious with Gary and they asked him why he did it and he said sometimes you have to do some things to get it sold in Hollywood. Gary wanted to play Bing in a movie so he had a big incentive for telling that kind of a story."

A very interesting revelation!

Straight Down The Middle

The latest Nike advert was revealed in December and it featured a song by Bing with leading sportsmen Rory McIlroy and Wayne Rooney taking each other on in a demonstration of their skills on the golf course.

While the ad starts off as a regular introduction for the Northern Irish golfer, McIlroy is soon joined by a smiling Rooney on the tee, grinning as the two-time Major winner tees off to get their round underway. At this point, the music strikes up and we hear Bing singing "Straight Down the Middle" for the rest of the lengthy commercial.

Rooney has a trick up his sleeve, as he unveils the new Nike Ordem Football as his ball of choice. The latest design by the sportswear giant is based around the

flight control of a golf ball, and the Manchester United striker wastes no time in swinging and swerving the ball along the golf course – hitting the pin with his first attempt with a little help from a computer-based friend.

As the pair make their way around the course, they soon emerge as the two leaders on the scoreboard (uncanny, right?) and it's neck and neck when they arrive at the 18th. But Rooney cracks under the pressure as he hits an errand ball towards the clubhouse. But as McIlroy shouts out "fore" to alert the unaware crowd gathered outside, one familiar face breaks away from an interview to head the ball back onto the green and set Rooney up for an easy finish, much to McIlroy's despair.

This familiar face? None other than Brazilian legend Ronaldo, whose cheeky smile is matched by the two on-course competitors. All that is left is for McIlroy to sneak the Ordem ball into his bag as his caddy looks on.

There have been 1.8 million hits on YouTube so far!

Very nice publicity for Bing. Another commercial that featured Bing (and the Andrews Sisters) during December was that for Sellotape and the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was used to good effect.

Stage show recreates Hope-Crosby radio program magic

The Fresno Bee web site in October last year had details of Bob Pasch's latest exploits!

Move over, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. Dorothy Lamour is here, and she knows how to hold her own with two big personalities like you.

In the past few years, local theater producer Chuck Carson has found a successful formula with his series of "Bob & Bing" productions. Staged as re-creations of an old-fashioned NBC radio program, the shows feature Lynn Roberts as Bob Hope and ***Bob Pasch*** *as Bing Crosby. Vintage commercials are part of the mix. Carson, who plays the onstage staff announcer, is joined by Hope and Crosby as the characters banter and sing together.*

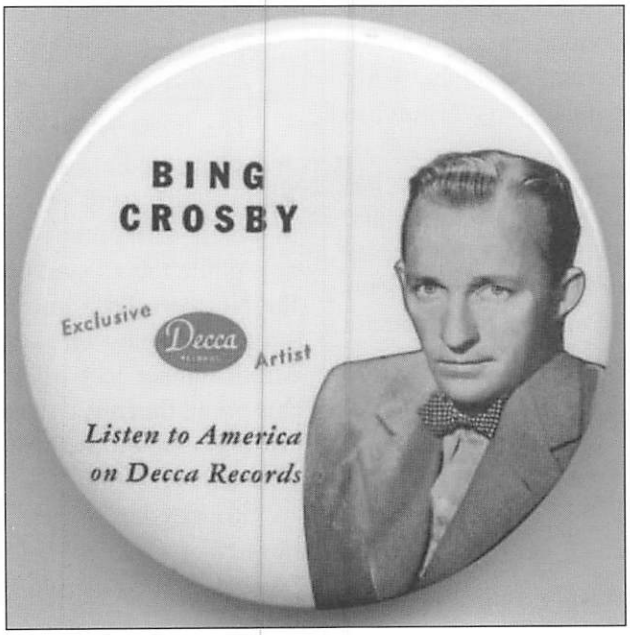
Recently Carson added another cast member: professional singer Cassie Miller, who plays Lamour. The movie star appeared with Hope and Crosby in the pair's famous "Road" movies.

The show "Bob & Bing — Road to Fresno," took place on October 25 at the Tower Theatre, in Fresno, California and this was followed on December 7 and 8, when the Historic Bal Theatre in San Leandro, CA presented *Bob & Bing - Road to San Leandro*. The show was staged as a 1940's NBC radio broadcast complete with an on-stage staff announcer reading vintage commercial copy of the period with a humorous touch and presenting recorded jingles of the era. Chuck Carson, as the annoucer, also interacted with Bob, Bing and their leading lady from their famous "Road" pictures, Dorothy Lamour, plus visits from Red Skelton, Jack Benny and Jimmy Durante. The show included a special Salute to Pearl Harbor to honor the service men and women of all wars. Lynn Roberts again starred as Bob Hope, with our own Bob Pasch as Bing.

Tony Jacobs - The Bing Crosby Years

Tony Jacobs, formerly a vocalist with the Syd Lawrence Orchestra, has, by arrangement with Bing Crosby Enterprises, put together a 2-hour tribute show to Bing and this has been showing at various venues in the UK. Locations where it has played in recent months include Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford; Number 8 Community Arts Centre, Pershore, Worcs; The Torch Theatre, Milford Haven; and the Broadway Theatre, Catford. The Bing show is booked to appear at Radlett Arts and the Nuneaton Abbey theatre in May.

Tony also provided the entertainment for the annual Sinatra Convention last October at the Clarendon Suite in Birmingham.



A Conversation with ICC Honary Member Regis Philbin

Greg Van Beek had to undertake a challenging assignment some months ago and he tells us all about it.

As some of you probably know, I host a weekly hour-long radio show over WJUB 1420 AM in Plymouth, Wisconsin called *Nostalgia Radio Time*. It's a mix of some of the finest music from legendary performers and personalities of the greatest generation, along with complete vintage broadcasts from the golden age of radio. Bing can be heard on each episode during the "Bing Sings" segment. The show airs every Saturday evening at 10 pm (cst) / 11 pm (et) and can be heard streaming on live at www.1420thebreeze.com or, on your iPhone or android device, by using the TuneIn Radio app and searching for WJUB. We have an active presence on social media as well; on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/NostalgiaRadioTime/ and on Twitter at @NRTonWJUB.

Nostalgia Radio Time began in April of 2009 as a monthly special; twelve episodes per year. This continued on until January of 2012 when it was expanded to a weekly series. I am a staff of one; I program, produce, direct, record and host, all from a makeshift studio out of my home, some 40 miles from WJUB radio. The shows are then e-mailed each week to the station as an MP3 file. As such, in mid October, I realized that the 100th episode of the weekly version was fast approaching. What a milestone; it hardly seemed possible in less than 2 years I'd already done 100 consecutive episodes! This got me thinking that I should do something special to make this episode especially memorable. I had already planned on doing a CD giveaway for promotional copies of CD's that arrived during the year, but I needed more. Someone well known to be a phone in guest. One name came immediately to mind: **Regis Philbin**. He is one of those people, much like Bing, whom everyone knows by just their first name.

So, on October 17th, I dashed off an e-mail to Regis' assistant Amanda explaining what I was planning on doing, and asking if Regis would consent to doing a brief phone interview. Much to my surprise and delight, I received a reply back from Amanda on October 21st saying "Regis would be happy to do an interview for *Nostalgia Radio Time*!" We quickly agreed on a date that would fit each of our schedules, which turned out to be Saturday, October 26th. That gave me exactly five days to come up with some good, and hopefully original questions to ask him, a daunting task for sure. After all, here is a man who has logged more hours on television than anyone else. In his 50 years in front of the camera, he'd literally interviewed 1000's of people. A veritable who's who of show business elite. And here I am, about to turn the tables and interview him! No pressure there at all. So I invited members of the Nostalgia Radio Time Facebook group to post their questions for Regis, and chose a few of those to augment those I had already come up with.

A few minutes after 10:30 am that Saturday morning, the phone rang and it was Regis. I had spoken with him a few times before, so it was good to reconnect with him again. He has that rare ability to immediately put you at ease. I'm quite certain that has been among the many keys to his success on television for so many years. Here then are excerpts from our interview:

GVB: To start off, why don't you bring us up to date on Regis. What are some of the things that have been keeping you busy in the two years since you've left *Live with Regis & Kelly*, and what are some of the projects are you currently involved with?

RP: Well, you know, as a matter of fact I've always been a big sports fan, Greg. Always. And all of these stations are now starting their own ESPN type of sports stations. ESPN has made millions of dollars for ABC. And so now here comes CBS, and NBC, and FOX with their own sports networks. So they (FOX) came to me and asked me would I like to do it for at least 100 days leading right up to the Super Bowl...which takes place for the first time ever in New York City, rain, snow or shine. Anyway, I said yes, that so that's what I've been doing for the last three months and I've got three more months to go.

GVB: I understand the name of the show is *Crowd Goes Wild*, is that right?

RP: That's it! That's exactly right! How did you know that?

GVB: I actually did a little bit of investigating ahead of time to see what you've been up to...

RP: You know, it's hard to tell people...they ask me 'well where can I see it', and when you're on cable there are so many different stations. I just can't tell everybody where to find it, except here in New York City where it's on channel 123, so it's simple 1-2-3.

GVB: I believe it's on the FOX Sports 1 network

RP: FOX Sports 1, right

GVB: I've seen you on David Letterman's show a number of times, and just this past week [late October 2013] on Katie Couric's show. You're also a regular guest on Rachael Ray's show, where you've become quite the chef.

RP: Yes, you know she [Rachael Ray] asked me to

come on once a month, I said sure. It's been a lot of fun. But, yeah one of the shows was on this week, and Katie Couric's show was on too. I enjoy going around visiting everybody and seeing how they're doing.

GVB: And as a singer, since 2004 you've recorded three wonderful albums, including one I'd like to feature a few cuts from on this program to kick off our sounds of the season here on *Nostalgia Radio Time*, The Regis Philbin Christmas album.

RP: Well how nice! You know, Greg, you have been a good friend, and I will never forget the copy of the visit that Bing Crosby made on the *Joey Bishop Show,* and Joey asked Bing to sing a song to Regis. I used to walk, Greg, for 45 minutes each day up and down Vine Street with Joey up to Hollywood Boulevard and back to our station, and when you walk and talk with someone for 3 years, it gets down to 'what did you want to be when you were a kid?' I told him every night at about 9:30 on WNEW here in New York, which was the big station at the time, they'd have a half hour of Bing Crosby. And just the sound of this man's voice and the way he sang those songs, it just gave me joy. And I was just a kid, 7 or 8 years old. And I never forgot it. So one day in our walk, I said to Joey 'what did you want to be when you were a kid?', and he said 'I wanted to be a comedian, I used to stand on the street corners in Philadelphia when I was 10 years old and just tell jokes and people would fall down laughing, and so I became a comedian.' And a pretty good one, too. I mean he was involved in the Frank Sinatra 'rat pack' times and all that. So he asked me 'what did you want to be, Regis?' I said 'I never told anyone this but when I was 7 or 8 years old I fell in love with Bing Crosby on the radio, and followed him all through his career, the movies, everything. *Kraft Music Hall*, I just loved him'. Well anyway, three months, later, there's Crosby on the show. And they wanted Bing to sing but they were all afraid to ask him because it was a talk show. Finally Joey said 'Bing, this is your biggest fan, why don't you sing "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" to him?' Crosby turned, looked at me, and sang "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral". I couldn't believe where I was. It was just fabulous. And then Bishop hadn't had enough and said 'now Regis, you know all of Crosby's songs, sing one to Bing'. And so I sang "Pennies from Heaven". Never thinking that I should get a recording of it or anything like that, and so for YEARS I was without that until one day you sent me a recording of that particular show and the singing. And I can't thank you enough for that, Greg. I will never be able to thank you enough for that. I've played it for so many people over the years and they've loved it.

GVB: Well it pleases me to know how much joy it has given you, and I'm glad that our friend Nick Perito made that happen. Everything fell into place when that tape arrived from **Martin McQuade**. It was sitting on my desk and that evening, Nick gave me a call. We used to talk every few weeks and solve all of the world's problems over the phone. In the course of our conversation I asked him if he had any gigs coming up and he said he was going to do a concert with you in San Diego in a couple of weeks. And when he said your name, I remembered the tape and told Nick about it. He thought you might like to have a copy, so I offered to send him one that he could pass on to you when you got together for rehearsals, which he did.

Regis with Bing on the Joey Bishop Show in 1967.

RP: That's exactly what happened! Well it was just a bonanza for me, I've loved it. And Nick Perito was a wonderful guy and, yes, he conducted for me on quite a few occasions and then one day he went into the hospital and never came out. It was tragic, I couldn't believe it. But he worked for so many years with Perry Como, you know, so he really knew his stuff.

GVB: And that leads me to the first song I'd like to feature from your Christmas album, which was written by our dear friend Nick Perito, "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Forever". I can't tell you how many times Nick expressed his frustration to me because more people didn't record the song. He always said "It says everything good about Christmas." When I would remind him that a couple of guys named Perry Como and Bob Hope had already cut the song, he'd laugh and say I guess I didn't do too bad. So when I saw that you recorded it, it actually brought a tear to my eye because I know how thrilled he would've been.

RP: Aw, well thanks, I really loved Nick. He was a wonderful guy. It is a very pretty song, and lately you haven't heard too many new songs about Christmas. It's

one of those things where they rely on the older songs. In any event I'm glad Nick had his shot at it.

GVB: Let's talk for a moment about the legendary daytime talk shows you hosted for nearly 30 years, *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee*, and *Live with Regis & Kelly*. You literally had thousands of guests on that show over the years, and I know it would be impossible to single out just a few as favorites or highlights, but I'd like to talk about a specific episode that aired in November of 1994 when Perry Como made his final appearance on national television on your show. Do you remember that?

RP: Yes I do, and that was his final appearance?

GVB: Yes on national TV it was

RP: Was he sick at the time? Was he getting sick?

GVB: He might've been. I know in his final years he developed symptoms of Alzheimer's.

RP: You know, and I'm sure you know this, Perry was a guest on Bing's show, I think it was the Oldsmobile Show. But it was early television. They concluded the show with both of them on stools doing duets. And it was just so fabulous. One night I was watching it at home and I got very, very emotional and very moved because I loved them both. So I called Perry and I told him what I was watching and he got such a kick out of it because he remembered it well.

GVB: They did about a 10 or 15 minute medley at the end of the show, just one song after another.

RP: Exactly right, Greg, yeah. Both sang them beautifully. It was just wonderful to watch.

GVB: On that 1994 episode of your show, you somehow coaxed Como into singing, accompanied by Nick at the piano, something I'm sure he hadn't planned on doing. He sang a beautiful rendition of the Burke & Van Heusen song 'It Could Happen to You'.

RP: Oh no kidding! You know, Greg, I should've saved all this stuff. I just... I don't know why I didn't. I have a room full of pictures, with Bing on the Bishop show, and Perry Como at various points where I spent a little time with him. But I don't have the sound that I should've saved from all of the shows that I did with these guys. If you ever come across a copy of that show I would love to have one.

GVB: I may have it here, and if I do I will send you a DVD. But the real highlight of the show was when you re-aired a segment from a few years earlier when you went searching for Perry Como. You climbed a hill to a billboard with Perry's picture on it, then you took a boat past his home in Jupiter, Florida and are yelling out to him "Perry! It's your old friend Regis! I think I can hear him singing" That was and still is hilarious.

RP: Yeah, I had my two little girls with me, we had just moved to New York and were getting accustomed to everything. We had the opportunity to go down to Florida and I said 'Let's try to see Perry Como while we're down there'. I called him and I said 'the boat is coming', but he said 'I hope I'm here, but I may not be here because I have to be somewhere', I don't know where it was. But anyway we had a good time and we played that a couple of times on our show and had some fun with it and I think he enjoyed it too.

GVB: Let's talk about Regis' music tastes. I know Bing Crosby, Perry Como and Dean Martin are three of your favorite singers, but what are some of the other vocalists and big bands that you enjoy from their era?

RP: Well from that era, boy there were so many big voices. Of course you know Sinatra is a powerhouse to listen to. He was just great. I enjoy listening to and watching the Dean Martin show because you'll see a lot of Bing on that. But who were the other great singers? Boy they had a ton of them in those days?

GVB: Well there was Dick Haymes.

RP: Dick Haymes, I just listened to him the other day. He had a very, very deep good voice, didn't he? I don't think he ever got his due, though, but he was there. He had one big movie, it was *State Fair*, I think.

Dick Haymes visits Bing on the set of *Connecticut Yankee.*

GVB: Yes, that was in 1945.

RP: Right, and that kinda propelled him to the big time. Who else? Give me some more names.

GVB: Oh, we could go on and on. There was a singer who had a great deal of success in the late 1940's named Buddy Clark

RP: Oh! Let me tell you something, you're fantastic because you're bringing up all of these great guys. I loved the sound of Buddy Clark's voice. I had never seen his face. I was at Notre Dame at school, but he sang on

the Carnation Hour, I think it was.

GVB: Exactly, the Carnation Contented Hour!

RP: Oh, he had a beautiful voice. Then for some reason, he got in a plane, and flew a little too close to the ground in Los Angeles as I recall, the plane hit something and they both went down. And that was the end of Buddy Clark. But, yeah, I thought he was fabulous and he did some great stuff with Doris Day too.

GVB: Speaking of Bing, we're certainly proud and honored to have you as a member of the International Club Crosby, Bing's fan club.

RP: Let me tell you something how impressed I am with that magazine. How do you guys get that all together, and I know you're putting it out in quarters (sic) now, but every edition is very, very impressive. And the fact that you've got people writing in from all over the world about what they thought of Bing, or what they liked, or what they remember, it's fantastic! I don't think anybody else has got anything like it.

GVB: Well thank you, we're very proud of what we come up with, and thanks have to go out to my co-editor Malcolm Macfarlane in England who really puts the whole thing together. He does a tremendous job with it and certainly does Bing's memory proud. It's quite an honor for an entertainer to have the distinction of having the oldest active fan club in the world.

RP: You know I had no idea that Bing was that big in England. I guess he was, huh? He has a big following there.

GVB: Oh yes, he was very active in England the last two years of his life. He did a two week stint at the London Palladium two years in a row that were sold out every night. Just fantastic.

RP: He made it look so effortless. Music just poured out of him. You know that a couple of years ago, and maybe I told you this, I had a show to do near Spokane. And we stayed at the hotel, the Davenport Hotel I think it was called, where Bing used to do a song or two as he was growing up, and then I went to his home, which is right on the campus now of Gonzaga. They took the home and tidied it up a little bit, they didn't change much. And there was his kitchen, which had a backdoor, and in those days he was about a block away from Gonzaga, but then Gonzaga took up a lot of the acreage around it to build on. But anyway, he would go out that door whistling everyday on his way to school. Can't you just picture that? Oh my. I enjoyed it so much. And then I went over to Gonzaga, and they, of course, have a whole archive of everything he's ever done. The books, the movies...

GVB: Oh yes, they have everything from his Oscar, to his pipe, to his toupee!

RP: Right! Have you been there?

GVB: I haven't been there yet, but over the years friends who have been have sent me a lot of pictures so I think I've seen a good portion of it that way.

RP: Well it's kind of a difficult place to get to, Spokane, but nevertheless, they've got an enormous statue, and I mean a GIANT statue of Bing with the pipe and the hat and the whole thing. So I went there and had a wonderful time with the people at the University who were very happy. And when I came home, I had pictures to show and a lot of little stories to tell about Bing and his days at Gonzaga. Yeah, that was a great one. When you stay at the Davenport, you can look across the street and see the Bing Crosby Theater! And not only that, he worked at the theater as a young guy in his teens. You know, backstage where ever he could get a job there. And he loved Al Jolson. Jolson made two appearances there, and Bing heard him and loved him. So when you hear them together on this album that came out of England, right?

GVB: Yes it's all the songs they did together on radio in the old days.

RP: They just worked so beautifully together. Just fabulous.

Dancing with Frank in *High Society*

GVB: We have a weekly feature on *Nostalgia Radio Time* called Bing Sings, where I put the spotlight on one of Bing's great recordings. So I have to ask you if there's a Christmas song by Bing that you'd like to hear, preferably one that isn't the obvious "White Christmas"?

RP: Yeah, let me just think. I wish I had the album in front of me so I could take a good look at it and pick

out a good one. Run over a couple of the songs.

GVB: Well, I know at one time you had David Bowie on your show...

RP: Oh the Little Drummer Boy?

GVB: Yes

RP: You know that's always good. It's really a study in singing. And Bowie, of course, had a fit before the whole thing and they had to calm him down, but you know the whole story. Finally they got together, after they kind of rewrote a few things, but you hear Bing in there, banging right along with him. He was just great. And one other performance that I really loved was the movie he did with Sinatra, and what was her name?

GVB: Grace Kelly?

RP: Yes, Grace Kelly, and those songs that Bing did, with Louie Armstrong, and Sinatra, are just classics. And the way Bing was handling himself, dancing along with Frank, it was just great. But you couldn't take your eyes off of him [Bing].

GVB: They all just electrified the screen.

RP: Yes they did.

GVB: The second half of NRT features a complete vintage radio show as broadcast in the 1940's and 1950's. So, again, I have to ask, is there a radio series you enjoyed listening to growing up during those years that you'd like us to feature? Jack Benny? Fibber McGee & Molly? Suspense?

RP: Well, I think it was every Thursday night, I used to listen to him on the *Kraft Music Hall*. He was terrific on that. That was a big, big hit. And I think that was his probably his biggest radio program that he hosted. Ken Carpenter was the announcer. It was just fabulous. He sounded great all the time, but in those years, the late 1940's and into the 50's he was at his peak, I think.

GVB: *Nostalgia Radio Time* has a fan page on Facebook, and I invited our listeners to post questions they'd like to ask you, so I chose a couple of good ones. The first one comes from Van Nuys, California and someone you might even know, Mickey Rooney's wife Jan. She wanted me to ask you if there is ever a chance Regis and Joy, will start their own show again someday, together? They were BOTH BRILLIANT together! And I think what she means is when your wife Joy would sub for Kathie Lee and later Kelly Ripa on your shows and you both worked so well together.

RP: Jan Rooney, yes! I talked to her last year. They were in a cabaret in New York City, Jan and Mickey. Mickey did a little bit and Jan did a lot of singing. They were great! But yes, a lot of people remember when Joy would fill in and really liked it and I thought she was terrific too. Because with Joy there were things we could talk about because we understood one another, as opposed to trying to tell a story to someone who wasn't there when it happened. But you know it's pretty tough to get a talk show now these days. I left, and I could've stayed but 28 years of the same thing, and then, you know Greg I was in Los Angeles working with Joey and then I got my own talk show on ABC, and that's how I wound up on ABC in New York. But it was a long, long time doing those talk shows and so I'd thought I had had enough but now that I'm talking to you about it and listening to what Jan had to say, I'm feeling like, hey I should be back there doing it again and maybe one day I will I hope.

GVB: Oh, that would be fantastic. The last question comes all the way from England and my BING magazine co-editor Malcolm Macfarlane He would like to hear about your memories of the great Rosemary Clooney.

RP: Oh Gee, she was SO great that gal. You know one time I took a camera crew over when I worked in Vegas over to, what was it, the Riviera Hotel? Anyway Rickles was there and I did a 3 piece interview with him, if you can imagine, right there in his dressing room as he's changing into his tux, as we're getting into the elevator, going downstairs, being met by the guy walking through the kitchen, getting ready to go out there. It's wonderful. But while I was there, I realized Rosemary Clooney was opening for him. And so I stopped by to see her, and I had known her off and on over the years, and we had a wonderful talk. And she said to me, 'you know the fella who saved my life was Bing Crosby, because I had been through a bad divorce, and was feeling very, very low, and very sick, and tired of everything. And one day the phone rang, and it was Bing. And he said I want you to come out with me, I'm going to go out on tour.' What year was that was that 1974?

GVB: 1976.

RP: And so it brought her back, and changed her whole life. She would come back to New York maybe three times a year and appear in the cabarets there, and Joy and I would go backstage and visit with her. She was just a sweetheart, you know. Just a great loss not to have her around.

GVB: One of the best.

RP: Absolutely. And she loved Bing.

GVB: Those walks you mentioned taking with Joey Bishop in the late 1960's down Vine Street made me think of the *Hollywood Palace* and how many times Bing hosted that show so close to where the Joey Bishop Show was taped.

RP: That's right! It was right up the street. Now was that before Joey or after?

GVB: That was the same time frame. The *Hollywood Palace* ran on ABC from 1964 to 1970.

RP: No kidding, because we started that show in '67 and ended in 1970. Yes, well I do have a couple of copies of Bing on that. One features Bing with Johnny Mercer and they did a long medley where they'd each take a line from a song and go back and forth. It was just fabulous.

GVB: Well our time is quickly running out, but before it does, I want to sincerely thank you, Regis for being a part of my 100th show. You are truly a genuinely

nice guy, and it's easy to see why you're so loved by so many for so long, and you will always be a welcome visitor in our homes for as long as you choose to be in front of the camera. One last thing, since we barely scratched the surface of your remarkable career, I would highly recommend that folks pick up a copy of your latest book titled *How I Got this Way* for the rest of the Regis Philbin story from A to Z.

RP: Well thank you very much, Greg. Again, you're the guy that sent me that Bing Crosby tape from the Joey Bishop Show and I'll never forget that either. Well, I'll be reading you in BING, ok? Thanks for a great magazine about a great guy. Good luck to everybody.

Greg Van Beek

***(Editor:** What a fascinating interview and thank you Greg for sharing it with us. Regis mentioned his visit to Spokane and **Peter Monaghan** writing on the Moving Image Archive News web site on July 18 last year had a major article about Bing and his boyhood home and he has kindly given us his permission to reproduce it here.)*

Bing at Home in Spokane, Washington

Gonzaga University, Crosby's early stomping ground, is where you can find his boyhood home, and much memorabilia.

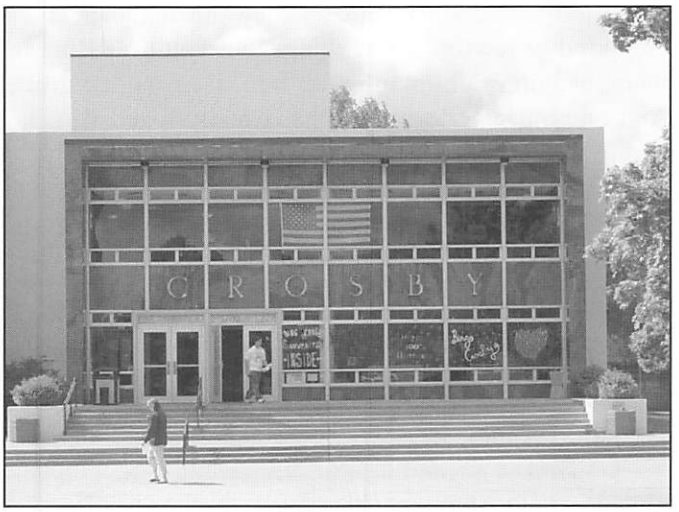
Spokane, Washington – Spokane is not the kind of location you might expect would give rise to one of the most acclaimed careers in 20th-century entertainment – most big-city Americans would consider it to be in the middle of nowhere.

But the prototypical American success story allows for coming from a far-flung place and only occasionally, with a mix of nostalgia and dread, looking back.

And Bing Crosby did come from such a town. That explains why, particularly since his death in 1977, this Northwestern inland city, and particularly its largest institution of higher education, Gonzaga University, have drawn attention to the crooner and actor's modest, middle-class upbringing. His childhood home is, in fact, on the Gonzaga campus, and has long served as the "Crosby House," a museum of Crosbyana. Much more of the trappings of the idol's life reside in the Gonzaga archives. Many are held in the Student Center's Crosbyana Room, while thousands more are preserved in the Gonzaga library's Special Collections.

Unsurprisingly, discoveries of forgotten Crosby artifacts have drawn the marveled attention of national media organizations. But reporters who know their Crosbyana know about his Spokane connections. They knew why a building that formerly housed Gonzaga's library was called the Crosby Library, and that Crosby helped to raise the $700,000 that built it, in 1957.

He did that by organizing a television special with an all-star lineup – Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, and himself – and then donated the production rights to the university. The Ford Motor Company sponsored the show, and used it as an opportunity to introduce its "car of the future," the Edsel – hence the show's name, *The Edsel Show*. It aired on CBS in October, 1957, and is nominated for an Emmy Award.



The Crosby Library

At the building's dedication as a memorial to the Crosby family on 3 November 1957, Crosby said to the 5,000 gathered: "If I am any kind of a success here or in show business, it is the result of the time I spent at Gonzaga in the elocution, the debating, and the dramatic societies."

That testimony no doubt delighted the university's Jesuit administrators, whom Crosby called "the good priests here."

There was more: "If I am successful," Crosby added, "it is because of what I learned here. ... I am tremendously grateful and I love this school and the people here."

He certainly had been phenomenally successful. His upbringing in Spokane had stood him in great stead.

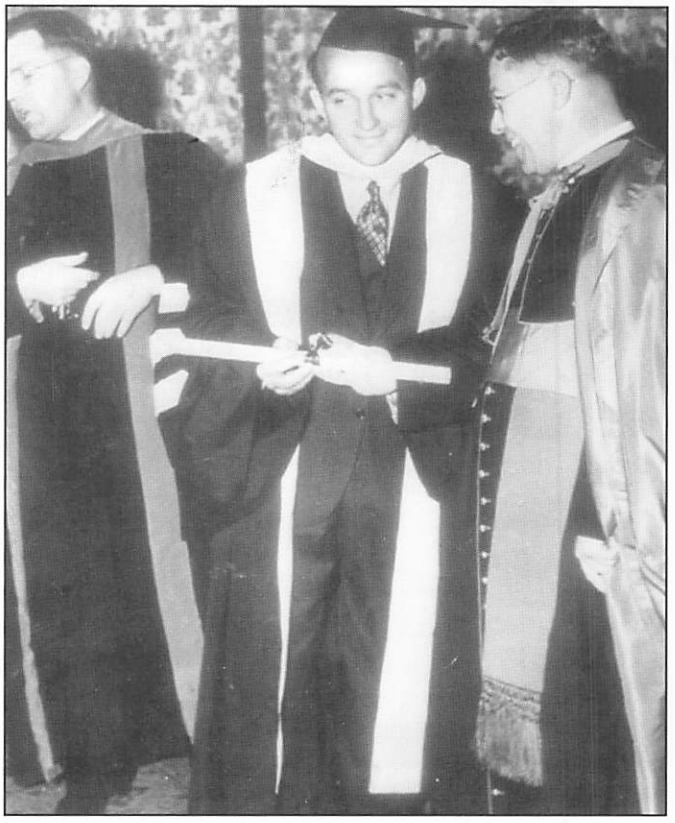
Spokane's Number One Son

Crosby was born in 1903 across the state of Washington in the port city of Tacoma, 35 miles south of Seattle, but his family moved here to Spokane when the baby Bing was three. He spent his youth and early career in this city, which is known as "The Inland Empire" because it's the largest settlement on the wind-swept, high-desert, wheat-thatched planes that extend eastward from the Cascade Mountains just east of Seattle, all the way to the Rockies.

Crosby was clearly more nostalgic about his hometown than most superstars, because he not only came back, but also bestowed generously on his city. He gave or raised money for many of Gonzaga's needs, including improvements in the residence of the Jesuits who run the institution.

All this is detailed on Gonzaga's extensive Crosby pages, which draw on Gary Giddins' *Bing Crosby: Pocketful of Dreams* (2001) and books, news clippings, and primary sources in the university's Bing Crosby Collection.

The site relates that, by the time of his death in 1977, the entertainer had donated over $1-million to the university, and his will left another $50,000 as an endowment fund. Long before the singer's death ended his philanthropism, Gonzaga had granted him an honorary doctorate – way back in 1937 – and had later accorded him other honors.



Bing receives his honorary doctorate in 1937

Crosby on the Gonzaga Campus

Various Gonzaga buildings and collections preserve Crosby's Spokane legacy. The **Crosby Library**, in which the **Crosbyana Room** had pride of place, and still does since the building became Gonzaga's student center in the early 1990s, when a new library was built. The Crosbyana Room's contents are rich. He had repeatedly asked his business manager and brother, Larry Crosby, to send shipments of his memorabilia to it – gold records, photographs, fan scrapbooks, records, trophies, and citations, and even the best-actor Oscar he won in 1944 for his portrayal of Father O'Malley in *Going My Way*. [In 1972, it disappeared from the collection for three days; a Mickey Mouse figurine took its place during the anxious interim.]

Among the room's prized gold and platinum records are *McNamara's Band, Don't Fence Me In,* and such Yuletide favorites as *Silent Night*. Then there is the Downy Flake Donut Award, bestowed during 1949 National Donut Week by the National Dunking Association. Its members judged Crosby the radio star "whose face is most conducive to dunking."

The **Crosby House**, which was originally just off campus but came to be on it with university expansion, was in private hands until 1980. The Higgins family had been only its second owners, after the Crosbys. The Gonzaga Alumni Association bought it for $60,000 and named it the **Crosby Alumni House**, with Crosby memorabilia on its main floor. More recently, the university took it over. Its centenary is this fall [2013].

Close by is the site of Crosby's elementary school, Webster Grade School, where Crosby got his nickname – his favorite comic-strip character was Bingo from the "Bingville Bugle" strip in a local newspaper. Crosby played baseball at Webster, but was better at swimming: He took seven medals in swimming and diving in 1915.

The school is, however, no longer there. It served as Gonzaga's law school until 2000, but the law school then moved into new quarters, and the building was razed to make way for new housing for the university's booming enrollment (that, thanks to the national success of its men's basketball program).

Echoes of a grade-school Bing Crosby crooning his first choruses presumably will haunt the new residence hall. Perhaps the campus, too, because once he was done with elementary school, Crosby moved on to what was then Gonzaga High School, and then from 1920 to 1924 he was at Gonzaga University, which shared a building with the high school.

He captained the high school's "Dreadnoughts" football team one year and played on the Junior Yard Association baseball and basketball teams, too. In college he played baseball for a year.

Gonzaga University Dramatic Club, 1920

Materials in Gonzaga's collection show that Crosby was a high-school devotee of music, debate, and drama.

Elocution classes enhanced the clarity of delivery that was among his career earmarks. He was a member of the Gonzaga Dramatic Club, House of Philhistorians, and Gonzaga Glee Club. Local and Gonzaga publications reviewed him favorably. Of his 1923 role in *It Pays to Advertise*, the city's newspaper (delivering it was one of Crosby's many high-school and college jobs) said he and his co-star "carry off all the play's hilarious moments" and that Crosby "bursts over with spontaneity in getting his amusing lines across the footlights." The co-star was Michael Pecarovich, who remained a friend and had bit parts in a few Crosby movies.

Crosby was clearly enormously energetic in his Spokane days, as throughout his illustrious career. He held high-school and college elected positions. In addition to delivering papers, he worked as a locker boy at a city swimming pool, a lifeguard, a caddy, a janitor at the Everyman's Club for loggers and miners, an alfalfa-farm worker as well as at the pickle factory where his father was employed as company secretary, a topographer with the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, and a law clerk. He didn't hold any of those jobs for long, but they apparently provided him the broad view of everyday life that emerged in his film work.

In 1924, while at the university, he fatefully bought a bass drum by mail order. It got him into the band of Alton Rinker, a local high-school student five years Crosby's junior. The band of high schoolers was the Musicaladers. It was Crosby who renamed Rinker "Al." The band worked social gatherings and at one point had a weekly twice-a-week gig at the Pekin Café, a high-schoolers' hangout, and then had an 18-week stint at Lareida's Dance Pavilion, six miles from Spokane.

The band proved more lucrative than Crosby's array of other jobs, but disbanded the year after he joined it. He and Rinker (the brother of stellar vocalist Mildred Bailey) went on to play entr'actes between movies at Spokane's Clemmer Theater, which is now the Bing Crosby Theater. That was the first time Crosby was a regular singer, and the stint lasted five months, long enough, and for enough money, that he left Gonzaga before his final year of pre-law education.

He left to sing. By then Spokane had provided him a varied apprenticeship in the arts, but also in life. He had become about as all-American as he needed to be to launch a career of immense popularity.

He did not return to Spokane for 12 years, then as big an entertainment star as any in the United States. He made several more trips here during his career. And he continued to support Gonzaga. In 1961, for example, he narrated the 30-minute promotional film *Take Gonzaga*, to promote the university's 75th anniversary in 1962. It shows him dispensing advice he had not taken, himself: He advises a young caddy to get a college degree before trying to make it on the golf circuit.

A Crosbyana Tourist Destination

Come here today, on a campus visit, and you will find a near-life-size statue of the crooner and film idol, in golf gear. It is out front of the old Crosby Library, now the Student Center. Erected in 1981, the statue is the work of a local artist, Deborah Copenhaver. On special occasions, such as the 105th anniversary of the crooner's birth in 2008, Gonzaga staff pull out one of three replicas of Crosby's trademark pipes, and screw it into the mouth of the statue – not because leaving a pipe there permanently might encourage undergraduates to smoke, but because otherwise light-fingered students tend to make off with them.

The statue was the setting, back in 1993, for the United States Postal Service's unveiling of its Bing Crosby stamp, part of its Popular Singers series.

Gonzaga's collection of Crosby, in its various locations on campus, totals more than 25,000 items and is the world's largest public collection of Crosbyana. Not only Crosby gave memorabilia to Gonzaga; so did family members, friends, and associates. But Gonzaga also pursued other avenues. In the early 1990s, it doubled its collection by acquiring the holdings of the Bing Crosby Historical Society, in Tacoma, which was dissolving. The organization had dated from 1977, the time of Crosby's death, and had boasted among its members Ronald Reagan and Queen Elizabeth II.

It's thanks to acquisitions like those that the student center's Crosbyana Room is so distinctive. The small museum is open year-round to students and staff, as well as to fans. Each year, 3,000 or more come from around the country and abroad.

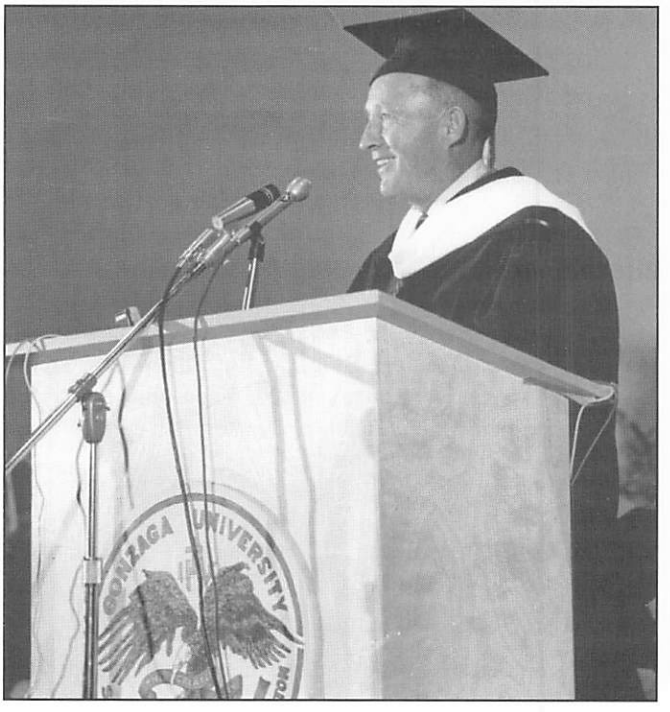
In the special-collections area of the library are

several shelves of additional material, from scrapbooks kept by fans to boxes of movie stills and scripts. Gonzaga also has a board game called "Call Me Lucky" that Parker Brothers released in 1954 (the year after the publication of Crosby's autobiography of the same title). About 1,000 Crosby long-play and 78 R.P.M. records are in the climate-controlled stacks, as are hundreds of recordings on vinyl or glass discs of Crosby radio shows.

The Crosby Room has long been a stop for tour buses. Authors have traveled to the collection, too. When Gary Giddins of *The Village Voice* wrote his biography of Crosby, back in the 1990s, he spent two weeks at the campus. "I found the collection enormously useful, essential," he told me at the time. "It has tremendous material I couldn't find anywhere else."

His book cast Crosby in a better light than some others published after Crosby's death. Some claimed that Crosby and his publicists cooked up his affable image. One Crosby son portrayed his father as rotten and violent.

Giddins disagreed: "I'm finding that Crosby was much more admirable than some of the other books would lead you to believe. He was an honorable and decent man who had some failings."



Crosby addresses the guests after receiving Gonzaga's highest honor, the DeSmet Medal, in 1968

The Gonzaga priests who knew Bing best are, of course, long dead. And students barely know who he is. It was not so at the time of Crosby's death on a golf course near Madrid in 1977; then, Gonzaga lowered its flag to half-mast and thousands paid homage at a memorial mass at St. Aloysius Church, a block from Crosby's childhood home. He had served there as an altar boy when he was 13.

For Stephanie Edwards Plowman, the special-collections librarian in charge of the Crosby archives, and her colleagues, the Crosby archives remain a proud legacy and research resource. Tourists still come here to the campus to visit the library's Crosbyana Room, and to take selfies in front of the Crosby House. Among celebrity drop-bys of recent years has been Regis Philbin, in town for a casino appearance.

The collection is far from Gonzaga's only cherished one. Also in the vaults is a rare-book collection with items dating back to 1475, as well as Jesuit missionary archives that detail many now-extinct American Indian languages.

And, naturally Gonzaga is not the only institution to seek to keep the Crosby croon going. The Crosby family, for example, has taken an increasing archival role. At the request of a curator at Bing Crosby Enterprises, in Malibu, Gonzaga archivists are going through material in the library's basement vault to find radio discs in order to digitize them for the library as well as for Kathryn Crosby, the singer's second wife. They will augment her large collection of her late husband's personal papers and photographs.

Crosby Enterprises is coordinating family activities. Its website's Video Vault shares many video clips – commercials, TV spots, public-service announcements, and the like. A similar Audio Vault is also online, as well as an extensive collection of photographs and facsimiles of magazine articles, posters, sheet music, and the like.

Bingophilia is for sale on the site's store: books, CDs, golf towels, pilsner glasses, mugs... The Bing Crosby Archive series of recordings debuted in 2010 to make available the Crosby family's holdings of out-of-print or never-released recordings and television specials, including his public-broadcasting special, *The Legendary Bing Crosby*. The series was relaunched earlier this year (2013), to considerable acclaim. "Jazz singing could use a fresh dose of Crosby's influence, after so many swaggering baby Sinatras," said Kevin Whitehead in an NPR broadcast. "Bring on the baby Bings."

Peter Monaghan

(Editor: Peter Monaghan, the editor of Moving Image Archive News, writes about the arts, scholarly research, and other topics. He was also the librettist for the "jazz opera," Space in the Heart by composer Bill (William O.) Smith, which was produced at Seattle's 2008 Earshot Jazz Festival; it was also produced at Symphony Space in New York on November 5 and 6, 2010. He has written for The Chronicle of Higher Education for more than 25 years about topics in the arts and humanities, the arts, the social sciences, and the sciences. He also is a columnist for The Australian newspaper's weekly Higher Education Supplement. Between 1994 and 2008, he was the editor for 10 years of Earshot Jazz, a Seattle monthly magazine, and continues to write for that to the listeners. Australian-born, he has lived in Seattle since 1986.)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD. Last year, Festival Films re-released "On the Road with Bing and Bob" with 3 added films and they also issued a DVD called "Golf Mania".

McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640, USA (Orders only Tel: 800-253-2187, email: info@mcfarlandpub.com)

Members will recall that Ken Crossland and your Editor wrote an award-winning book called **"Perry Como-A Biography and Complete Career Record"** a year or two back. The book has recently been released as a softcover and as an ebook. Cost $25. Print ISBN: 978-0-7864-7166-9, Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4766-0024-6. The book has 73 photos, discography, bibliography, index. 310pp. softcover (7 x 10). A Google search should find it easily but if not go to:

www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-7166-9

Oxford University Press reminds us that:

Late Life Jazz: The Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney by Ken Crossland and Malcolm Macfarlane continues to be available through all good bookshops and from Amazon, or direct from Oxford University Press at: http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199798575.do

Prices: $23.96 (Amazon USA), $26.84 (Amazon USA – Kindle), Can$29.95, £18.99 (UK), £17.09 (UK - Kindle)

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 email: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing and other easy listening artists' CDs, please contact Ray.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)

The Society has been running since 1977 having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights.

The film night for December 2 featured *Going My Way* with "Private Screenings with Jane Powell – Reel Memories" in support. Future film nights are planned for April 22, June 16, August 19, October 21 and December 9. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and has recently been revamped. The audio and video vaults, which contain much rare material, have now been reinstated after a brief absence.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Daily entries are made and the number of people who have "liked" the site has now risen to over 226,000. It was 127,000 four months ago. Almost unbelievable! Every daily entry is usually 'liked' by hundreds of people as well and there are many comments. The most popular city in December where "likes" originated was Los Angeles and the main age group liking the site was 45-64. There are well-known schemes to buy "likes" of course but whether this is the case here is not known.

Bing Crosby on Twitter

See www.twitter.com/Bingconstantly for this site which appeared last year and which has lots of useful tweets. It has 3855 followers at present.

@Bing_Crosby is still the place to go for Bing Crosby Inc. There are 2044 followers as we go to press. Not as successful as the Facebook page!

YouTube

There are many Bing items on YouTube. Bing Crosby Enterprises has its own channel at YouTube with many Bing videos in evidence. Go to:

http://www.youtube.com/user/BingCrosbyEnterprise

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Lionel Pairpoint's marvellous radio book, Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can be accessed. Your editor's book "Bing Crosby – Day by Day" is on the site too and it has had many additions made to it in recent months, including a good number of the letters written by Bing over the years. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog

ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

The Bing Crosby News Archive

David Lobosco runs this blog which has news and many stories about Bing at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

Tony Meade's blog

Tony has an interesting and varied site at http://bingsphotos.blogspot.co.uk/

John Marshall's "The Written Word"

John now has a site of his own named "Footloose" and both of his excellent PowerPoint presentations "A Night At The Movies" and "The Written Word" are at http://www.johncmarshall.co.uk/

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698)

website: www.intuneinternational.com)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent monthly periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, website: www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. email: suegokgor@aol.com.

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (email: JWWehrman@aol.com - website: www.jolson.org)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.flias.com/)

A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).

A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Ken Barnes, who made those great albums with Bing in the 70s, is the Honorary President.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, c/o Penny Probert, 15 Bessels Way, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2QG, UK (email: pat_woor@yahoo.co.uk)

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £8.50 (UK), 10 Euros (Europe) and $20 (USA). A quarterly newsletter of 12-14 pages is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

1. The Americans: Fifty Talks on Our Life and Times

By Alistair Cooke, Hardcover, 272 pages. Published October 12th 1979 by Knopf ISBN-10: 0394503643

Margaret Kliskey came across this book recently and drew our attention to Alistair Cooke's fine tribute to Bing. First broadcast by the BBC in 1977, we have published it before (last time in 1999, BING #122) but it really is worth reading again. In the book, Mr. Cooke has been talking about Groucho Marx and then he turns his attention to Bing.

...The other great man was a world apart from Groucho – in geography, upbringing, temperament and talent. I'm talking about Harry Lillis Crosby who, for reasons as obscure and debatable as the origins of the word 'jazz', was known from boyhood on as Bing. Some years ago, a friend of mine, a publisher, thought of persuading Bing to sit down in several sessions with a tape recorder and put out a book of reminiscences. My friend was very steamed up about this project and came to me one day and said he'd got the main thing, he'd got the title. He narrowed his eyes and said very slowly *'My Friends Call Me Bing.'* Four words too many, I said. And truly, I don't suppose there are more than half a dozen people in the world who would be instantly recognizable by a single word.

It's been just over fifty years since we were first exposed to the Rhythm Boys and their lead tenor, who provided the first happy breakaway from the ladylike sopranos and resonant baritones of the London and New York stages who were singing Youmans, Gershwin and Rodgers as if they were still commuting between Heidelberg and Ruritania. Then the Rhythm Boys' tenor, never identified on the record label, broke loose on his own, and. the word ran through the English underground that a genuine jazz singer - and a white man! - had appeared in the unlikeliest place: breezing along on the ocean of Paul Whiteman's lush symphonic sound. For about six precious months, as I recall, from the fall of 1927 through the spring of 1928, Whiteman, of all people, permitted a small jazz group - Bix Beiderbecke, Frank Trumbauer, Eddie Lang and Crosby - to be given its head. And on the long spring nights, the punts drifting along the Cambridge Backs gave out the easy, vagabond phrases of Bing and the lovely codas of Bill Challis's orchestrations.

For several years after that, the underground went into mourning for the apostasy of Bing Crosby, who turned into a gargling crooner. We abandoned him as a traitor, until after the war years he relaxed again into the unbuttoned troubadour, the mellower jazz singer, known from El Paso to El Alamein as the Groaner, Der Bingle and always Bing. For thirty years or so, there appeared a parade of male singers from Russ Columbo through Como and Sinatra and beyond, who could never have found their own style if Crosby had never existed.

By then, Bing had done everything he wanted to do in music and movies, and having wisely appreciated the approach of the gentleman with a scythe, he countered him by developing other talents and went off to fire 3-irons in Scotland and repeating rifles in Africa.

Bing makes a close examination of a shotgun he was considering purchasing for his hunting activities

Never a man to push himself, at twilight or any other time, he crooned only to himself. Then, fifty years after his first record, he cut a final album. Well into his seventies, he was the same Bing, because he had the great good sense to know the right key, the navigable modulations, where to go and where not to go, unlike some other star-studded egos who like to fancy that the rules of mortality have been suspended for them alone

I first ran into him on the set of one of the Hope-Crosby 'Road' movies, and I think I picked up a false impression of him right away. Because he was saucy, mischievous, almost gabby when he was working, especially with Hope. They ad-libbed so much and broke down in chuckles so often that at one point Bing turned to a writer who was sitting with the director and said, 'If you hear any of your own lines, shout Bingo!' Of course, Bing was witty, in a droll, tired way (nobody else would have described his face with its flapping ears, as looking 'like a taxicab with both doors open'), but the movie image of Bing was a very high-pressure version of the man off the set.

Once the lights dimmed and the director said, 'It's a take,' Bing visibly drooped into a character so shambling and low key that I got the impression he'd had a

sleepless night and would soon be off for a nap. People used to ask me, 'What was Bing like playing golf, I'll bet he was uproarious, right?' In fact, he was relaxed to the point of boredom, good-natured boredom. It's true he always looked you in the eye, but he did it with the grey, tired eyes of a man who had seen everything - a lot of fun but also a lot of grief – and was never going to be surprised by anything said or done,

From his early success days with the Rhythm Boys and on into his movie career, there'd been all sorts of problems in and around his family: sickness, death, the bottle, truancy, spats and sulks with his sons. Until he came into port at last, after some stormy seas, with his second wife and his new family. It is possible that he talked about these things to very close friends, but even his butler couldn't recall any. To everyone, except some missing confidante, he put up the quiet defence of offhand, easy-going small talk.

I can't think of another man of anything like his fame who was so unrattled by it and so genuinely modest. The accursed foible of show business people is prima donnaism: the massive ego, the implication that the whole world is revolving around them and their new picture, their new plans - which they pretend to find delightful but embarrassing. Not Bing. He was in this more mature than any actor or actress, author or musician, statesman or politician I have known in coming to sensible terms with great fame. His mail must have been staggering, with its appeals for favours and money from every charity and every crackpot in the world. He never mentioned it. He was polite to every nice fan, and every child, and every moron who hailed him. All his later concerts, and pro-amateur golf tournaments, passed on the receipts to a raft of favourite charities.

When he died, there was a spate of film clips and replayed old interviews and the like. The most revealing-of these was one done shortly before he died by the news interviewer, Barbara Walters, who does have a knack for asking the childlike questions we'd all like to ask but don't dare. She asked him to sum himself up, and he allowed that he had an easy temperament, a way with a song, a fair vocabulary; on the whole a contented life. And she said, 'Are you telling us that's all there is - a nice, agreeable shell of a man?' Bing appeared not to be floored. After the slightest pause for deep reflection, he said, 'Sure, that's about it. I have no deep thoughts, no profound philosophy. That's right. I guess that's what I am.'

It was so startling, so honest, and probably so true, that it explained why he'd been able, through hard times, to stay on an even keel, Perhaps he was one of those people who, though not at all selfish, are deeply self-centred: what they call 'a very private person', Because he couldn't identify with other people's troubles, he was able to appear, and to be, everybody's easy-going buddy, and forget death and disaster in a recording date or a round of golf. He was the least exhibitionist celebrity I have ever known. And because death is so dramatic, so showy, some of us cannot believe he won't show up in the locker room tomorrow and say, 'Well, skipper, how's tricks?'

Alistair Cooke

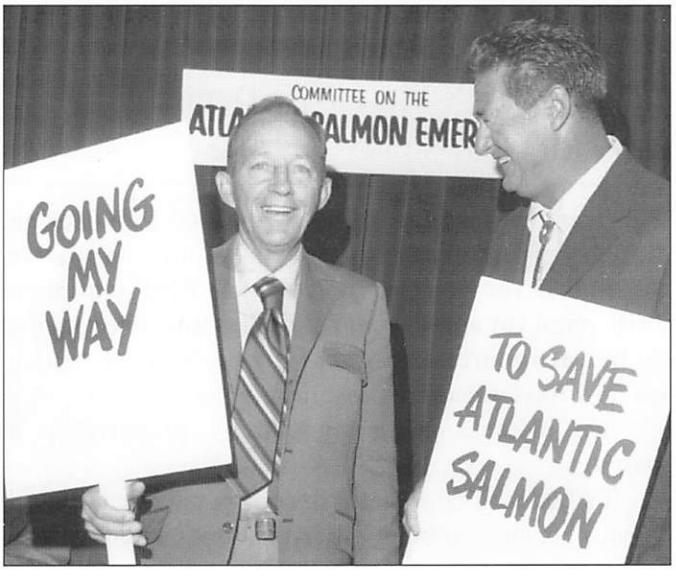
2. The Kid: The Immortal Life of Ted Williams

By Ben Bradlee, Jr. Hardcover, $35, 864 pages. Published by Little Brown and Co. 2013 ISBN-10: 0316614351, ISBN-13: 978-0316614351.

Martin McQuade takes a look at this new book.

Ted Williams and Friend

The Kid: The Immortal Life of Ted Williams by Ben Bradlee, Jr. (Little Brown and Co. 2013) is an exhaustively researched biography of the Boston Red Sox hitter. At several points Williams crossed paths with Bing. During the 1946 World Series pitting Boston against the St. Louis Cardinals, Williams received a most welcome message. "Ted brooded about having gone 1-7 in St. Louis...he did seem pleased to pass around a telegram he'd received from a new fan after the second game. 'Don't forget, I'm a National Leaguer, but I'm for you.'." Bradlee drops the tantalizing tidbit that, at the time, the two had been considering making a baseball movie together in the off-season.



Bing and Ted make their appeal to save Atlantic salmon.

They shared passion for other sports. Bing appeared in one of the many 15-minute TV spots on fishing which the baseball legend narrated. "The films were syndicated by Beacon Television of Boston, which Ted and his business manager, Fred Corcoran, held stock in." Corcoran had been a promotional director for the PGA. On New Years Eve, 1952 Corcoran accompanied Williams to Los Angeles with the hopes "to show off his

star baseball client to Bing Crosby and the like, if Ted's schedule permitted."

Their mutual interest in conservation resulted in a special event. "In 1971, Williams and Bing Crosby headlined a gala at The Waldorf Astoria in New York to focus attention on the fact that Danish commercial fisherman were killing huge numbers of salmon in their North Atlantic feeding grounds." Veteran sportscaster Curt Gowdy was M.C.

They also made a joint appearance in 1957 in a promotional short for The Jimmy Fund, an organization devoted to children's cancer research. This hitherto unknown film was aptly entitled, *Ted Williams and Friend* and it can be seen on the Internet at: http://www.jimmyfund.org/media/flash/vintage-trailers/williams-bing/williams-bing.html.

Every summer since the Jimmy Fund's theater program started in 1949, participating movie theaters had shown a short film of the work being done at the Children's Cancer Research Foundation in Boston. Then, an announcement was made asking if anyone would like to donate to the Jimmy Fund and this was followed by volunteers going around the theater with canisters collecting from the audience money for cancer research and patient care. In 1953, Deborah Kerr recorded an on-screen appeal which aired in theaters following showings of *From Here to Eternity*. It may well be that Bing and Ted's appeal was shown in conjunction with *Man on Fire*.

Martin McQuade

Bing Crosby's First Wife Denied Value of His Publicity Rights

This was the headline in the Hollywood Reporter on January 30. What was it all about? Well, we mentioned the start of it in BING #155 (summer, 2010, page 10) and a legal ruling has now been made. So to learn more, read Eriq Gardner's article which we now have pleasure in reproducing,

Are likeness rights community property in a marriage?

It's better to be a living famous person than a dead famous person, but being a dead famous person isn't all bad.

Michael Jackson made $160 million between June 2012 and June 2013, according to *Forbes*. **Elvis Presley** earned $55 million in his time. **Elizabeth Taylor** raked in $25 million, **Marilyn Monroe** $15 million and **Steve McQueen** $9 million.

The lucre is partly derived from publicity rights, which covers the names, voices, signatures, photographs and other forms of a person's likeness. Dozens of states have extended this benefit to celebrities posthumously, and just yesterday in a case involving **Jimi Hendrix**, the 9th Circuit refused to declare Washington's publicity rights statute as unconstitutional.

The licensing spoils go to the dead famous person's heirs, but a fascinating legal question remains unsolved: Do ex-wives and ex-husbands (and their descendants) deserve a piece of these riches?

A California appeals court got its chance on Wednesday to provide an answer.

The dispute involved singer-actor **Bing Crosby**, first married to a woman named **Wilma** ***(Editor: Dixie Lee's real name was Wilma Wyatt)***. From 1930 until 1952, the two were married and had four sons. Then Wilma died.

Five years later, Crosby married actress **Kathryn Grant**. Together, they had three children and remained married for the next 20 years, until Crosby died in 1977. Crosby's will left everything to his second wife *(sic)*.

HLC Properties was the trust set up to manage the estate.

In 1996, the trustees of Wilma's estate sued HLC over "interest, dividends, royalties and other income derived from community property" of Bing and Wilma.

The case was settled in 1999 for about $1.5 million.

But that wasn't the end of this, because a few years later, Wilma's Trust came around to the idea that they should be benefiting from Crosby's publicity rights. After all, he became famous during that first marriage. Weren't those publicity rights *community property*?

It is a fascinating issue and one that is likely to come up in the future. In this particular situation, the judges couldn't reach the question before figuring out whether the 1990s dispute and settlement precluded the claim from Wilma's Trust.

The 1999 agreement between the parties entitled the Wilma Trust to a share of income "derived" during the first marriage and "discovered in the future." Otherwise, the settling parties released claims on each other. So if Wilma's Trust could have made the claim back in the 1990s, it wasn't newly discovered. It was *res judicata*, a matter already judged.

In 2008, California governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** authorized an amendment to the state's publicity rights statute, and the Wilma Trust pointed to this change to make the case that something new had happened.

But on Wednesday, California appeals judge **H. Walter Croskey** writes in an opinion how the state's posthumous right of publicity has been on the books for quite some time and that the 2008 law "only clarified" the older statute's original intent.

"Since we conclude that SB 771 only clarified existing law, the amendment did not create any new rights that fell outside of the 1999 settlement's release of all claims to community property, the argument of Wilma's Estate that Bing's right of publicity did not exist in 1999 and thus could not have been the subject the settlement agreement must fail," writes the appeals judge, reversing the trial judge. "The petition of Wilma's

Estate is clearly barred by res judicata."

So is the right of publicity community property?

Although the appeals court needn't answer the question because the lawsuit was precluded, a footnote on the last page suggests an answer. It's a wowser of a footnote, confusing as hell, but it suggests that publicity rights law stands outside of family law—that the way someone transfers a publicity rights asset strongly suggests it is a "separate property" rather than a community property asset.

Cynthia Tobisman, one of the attorneys who represented Kathryn Crosby and her children, makes a strong argument that this could become the legal footnote of the year (at least in family law circles).

After all, if publicity rights are not community property, that won't just impact dead celebrities but living ones as well. "This suggests an entertainer holds onto their publicity rights their whole life," she says. "If **Tom Cruise** gets divorced, **Katie Holmes** can't say I have half of your right to publicity."

Eriq Gardner

Bing and Kathryn at the London Palladium in 1977.

Celluloid Crosby

Question: Which Father O'Malley story came first? *Going My Way* or *The Bells of St. Mary's?* Answer: *The Bells of St. Mary's. Going My Way,* although released 19 months before *Bells,* was written after *The Bells of St. Mary's* was conceived.

The chronology begins in 1942. Leo McCarey, who directed both pictures, was under contract to RKO studio. He was friendly with a real life Father Martin O'Malley and one of his aunts was Sister Mary Benedict. He concocted a story, which he called "The Padre", around those two characters. After two actors turned him down for the role of Father O'Malley, he decided to settle for Bing. Bing was under contract to Paramount. In order to secure Bing for "The Padre" RKO had to allow McCarey to direct another film for Paramount. That utilised the Father O'Malley character[1] in a totally new story devised by McCarey and written by Paramount writers Frank Butler and Frank Cavett. It was entitled *Going My Way.* And so the original scenario became the sequel. What follows is a comparison between the two Father O'Malley films.

	Going My Way (1944)	**The Bells of St. Mary's** (1945)
Production Company	Paramount	RKO[2]
Initial casting	Spencer Tracy then James Cagney (as Fr. O'Malley when "Padre" envisaged) [3]	
Filming location	Paramount backlot	RKO studio and Paramount backlot
Principal photography	58 days 16 Aug 43 – 22 Oct.43	59 days. 1 Mar 45 – 14 May 45 (for retakes)
Production cost	$1M	$1.6M
USA box office revenue	$14.4M	$17.7M
USA initial release	27 Apr 44 (on military bases) 3 May 44 general release	6 Dec 45 1959 re-release by Republic Pictures
Running Time	130 minutes	126 minutes
Academy Awards[4]	10 nominations; 7 wins	8 nominations; 1win
Best Picture awards	Golden Globe (1945) New York Film Critics (1944)	None
Box-office clout	Broke house records at New York Paramount. Played to 1,010,000 people and grossed $847,000[5]	Gaumont Cinema, Derby, UK, admitted a record 46,000 patrons in one week, opening at 10:00 a.m. to accommodate the crowds
National Film Preservation Board selection	2004[6]	
Top 300 films ranking "Variety" review	#114 (US box office takings)	#89 (US box office takings)[7]

Picture is a warm, human drama studded liberally with bright episodes and excellent characterizations accentuated by the fine direction of Leo McCarey. Intimate scenes between Crosby and Fitzgerald dominate throughout with both providing slick characterizations. Major thread of gaiety runs through the proceedings, and McCarey has liberally sprinkled individual episodes along the way for cinch audience reaction.

A warmly sentimental film with a simple story leavened with many laughs and bears comparison with *Going My Way.* Leo McCarey, who demonstrated his ability to combine wholesome sentiment into a potent attraction with *Going My Way,* duplicates that ability as producer-director on this one. Ingrid Bergman again demonstrates her versatility as sister in charge. Her clashes with Crosby – all good mannered – over proper methods of educating children…will have an audience alternatively laughing and sniffling.

Notes:

(1) Halliwell's Film Guide wrongly refers to *Say One For Me* (1959) as featuring Bing playing Father O'Malley for the third time on screen. He was Father Conroy in that film.

(2) RKO released the film which was the first production of the independent but short lived Rainbow Productions, Inc. It was formed by McCarey, Crosby and Hal Roach Jr. amongst others. Rainbow Productions was sold to Paramount in December, 1947. In 1954 the rights to the film reverted to McCarey who tried to arrange a re-release through Paramount. Paramount declined and Republic Pictures Corporation, a minor outfit, re-issued it in North America in 1959.

(3) The casting for *The Bells of St. Mary's* was set as soon as McCarey embarked on the sequel to *Going My Way.* He had a contingency plan in case Ingrid Bergman became unavailable. In a 1974 interview Irene Dunne said: "Leo McCarey phoned and said if Ingrid Bergman turned down the part of the Swedish nun ... then I would get it."

(4) The Oscar recipients for *Going My Way* were Paramount (Best motion picture), Bing Crosby (Actor), Barry Fitzgerald (Actor in supporting role), Leo McCarey (Directing), "Swinging on a Star", music by James Van Heusen; lyrics by Johnny Burke (Song), Leo McCarey (Writing - original motion picture story) and Frank Butler and Frank Cavett (Writing - screenplay). Bing's acceptance speech ran: "All I can say is that it sure is a wonderful world when a tired crooner like me can walk away with this hunk of crockery." The sole Oscar win for *The Bells of St. Mary's* went to RKO Radio Sound Department for sound recording.

(5) *Going My Way* went on to break records of box-office tickets sales in 2420 cinemas in North America. To put that achievement into perspective, there were just under 20,000 operating cinemas in the USA at the time.

(6) Each year the American National Film Registry evaluates 1,000 films with a view to selecting 25 to be preserved. The selection board policy states that titles chosen for preservation "are not necessarily the best American films ... but those that continue to have cultural, historical or aesthetic significance".

(7) These rankings were calculated in 2005. They were based on the USA domestic box office takings adjusted for inflation.

There's an interesting footnote relating to *The Bells of St. Mary's.* In 1971 *The Godfather* was shooting on location in New York. Christmas, 1945, was being re-created outside Radio City Music Hall. The theatre marquee announced the current film playing was Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman starring in *The Bells of St. Mary's.* Theatre ushers had to advise patrons that the film showing on screen was Paramount's *A New Leaf* starring Walter Matthau and Elaine May coupled with the annual Easter stage show. I wonder how many people were disappointed?

Keith Parkinson **k.parkinson1941@btinternet.com**

If you want to BLOT OUT Your Troubles
"DON'T MISS THIS ONE!"
"Going my way"
A Paramount Picture with BING CROSBY
Barry Fitzgerald · Frank McHugh · Porter Hall · Fortunio Bonanova
And RISE STEVENS
LEO McCAREY
Opening at the PALACE THEATRE
WED. Aug. 16
At 9 A. M.

Father O'Malley in Action

The Look of Love

Members will know that *The Bells of St. Mary's* was issued recently on Blu-ray by *Olive Films* and enclosed with it was an excellent essay by the TCM movie blogger R. Emmet Sweeney. It follows on nicely from Keith's article and we thought you would all like to read it.

As WWII was winding down, the most popular character in America was the singing priest Chuck O'Malley. As portrayed by Bing Crosby, O'Malley was an amiable reformist, trying to bring Catholicism out of the cathedral and onto the streets. Created in collaboration with director Leo McCarey, *Going My Way* (1944) and *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) were the highest grossing films of their year, and amassed eight Academy Awards® between them. Adjusted for inflation, *The Bells of St. Mary's* made more money domestically than *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) (source: www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/adjusted.htm). Father O'Malley is a kind of Catholic superhero, trying to modernize the religion before it lapses into irrelevancy.

Following *Going My Way,* McCarey was one of the highest paid men in America, and he could call his own shots. He formed a production company, Rainbow, and started planning the sequel, *The Bells of St. Mary's,* which he sold to RKO *(Going My Way* was distributed through Paramount). He developed the story with screenwriter Dudley Nichols, which focuses on the efforts of Sister Mary Benedict (Ingrid Bergman) to acquire a new building for her crumbling school, which will soon be shut down because of code violations. Father O'Malley is the new parish priest who must try and corral her ambition.

Bergman was under contract with David O. Selznick, so RKO had to pay him $175,000 to borrow her services, as well as sell him the rights to *Little Women* and *A Bill of Divorcement.* Bergman recalled how Selznick attempted to dissuade her from accepting the role, arguing that she "would just be a stooge for Bing Crosby's singing." She was enraptured by McCarey's energy, though, and felt that, "If you didn't like him, there was something wrong with you." It was a hefty sum for RKO to pay, but Bergman had just won the 1944 Best Actress Oscar® for *Gaslight,* and teaming her up with Crosby was the safest box office bet in town. Crosby was an altar boy as a teenager, and attended a Jesuit secondary school, but dropped out of Gonzaga to pursue a career in music. Conversant with both laissez-faire parishioners and strict observers, he was the ideal personality to bridge the gap between the traditionalist and progressive wings of the Catholic Church.

While the episodic *Going My Way* has a tendency to meander, The *Bells of St. Mary's* is anchored by the bubbling rapport between Crosby and Bergman. In a reversal of traditional gender roles, O'Malley is presented as a tender nurturer, while Sister Mary is strict and assertive, even teaching a young boy how to box. Crosby is introduced to St. Mary's school through a series of humiliations. He is chastised by the maid (Beulah Bondi, from McCarey's *Make Way For Tomorrow),* who clucks "I see you don't know what it means to be up to your neck in nuns". In *Going My Way* he owns every room he's in with his laid back charm, whereas when he lays back here, he accidentally hits a buzzer and rouses the whole convent. Upon entering the conclave, he proceeds to sit down on a shrieking kitten. And when he gives his welcome address to the nuns, another cat toys with a straw hat behind him, causing the sisters to erupt in laughter.

Despite these indignities, Father O'Malley is still eager to assert his masculinity, so after two kids end up in a brawl, he expresses pride that they stood up for themselves. He tells Sister Mary, "On the outside, it's a man's world." Mary replies, "How are they doing, father?" Their shifting power relations are expressed through the direction of their gaze. Mary begins her retort with modesty, eyes looking down, but by the end of her pointed phrase they drift up and stare straight off-screen at O'Malley, with the edges of her mouth curling into a grin. In his reaction shot O'Malley exhales and looks down, mumbling, "not doing too good" under his breath. This oblique reference to the horrors of WWII is also a decisive moment in their relationship. From here on out they exchange roles - Mary will exert aggression, and O'Malley compassion, accepting his subordinate role in the school's pecking order. He becomes a matchmaker for an estranged husband and wife whose daughter attends the school, while Sister Mary teaches her kids how to swing a baseball bat and throw a punch.

McCarey modeled Bergman's character after his aunt, also named Sister Mary Benedict, a member of the Immaculate Heart Convent in Hollywood. Bergman portrays her with impish exuberance, an admitted tomboy who still finds pleasure in upsetting the expectations of how a nun is supposed to act. Bergman is very loose and inventive, and contributed eagerly to the improvisations that McCarey encouraged. Off-hand gestures, like how she flips a baseball off her wrist in a sporting goods store, or exaggerates her footwork during a boxing lesson, were made possible by McCarey's improvisatory process. During down time, the director would sit at a piano and spitball ideas with the cast, encouraging acts of wild spontaneity. Bergman was already feeling free, not having to worry about her figure since she was clothed in a nun's habit for the entire feature. "I was like a child with money", she recalled, "and in the country of the greatest ice cream."

McCarey put this improvisatory process on the screen with the Christmas Play, which Sister Mary is overseeing. She lets the children write it themselves, and informs O'Malley that, "Every time they do it, the dialogue is different." The children are clearly making it

up as they go along, as Bobby (the son of musical director Robert Emmett Dolan) hems and haws his way through the story of the birth of Jesus, ending in a tableau of golf-club wielding shepherds. Instead of closing with "O Holy Night", the kids sing "Happy Birthday". Despite being set at a Catholic school, The *Bells of St. Mary's* is quite secular, presenting the church as more of a social services organization than a religious one.

This is made explicit with the subplot of Patsy Gallagher (Joan Carroll), whose single mother pays the bills through prostitution. O'Malley takes her in as a student without asking questions, and tracks down her errant pianist father. This whole section plays like canned melodrama, a staid commercial for the value of church in the community. It almost seems as if McCarey included these scenes so he could get away with the more subversive antics of the rest of the movie.

One of the next turning points in the film occurs during a secular song. Sister Mary is singing a traditional Swedish folk tune by the piano with the nuns gathered all around her. O'Malley is attracted to the scene by her lilting soprano. He steps towards the circle, and McCarey cuts into a shot from his pov. *(Editor: A point of view shot [also known as a POV shot or a subjective camera] is a short film scene that shows what a character [the subject] is looking at [represented through the camera]).* It is the most artful composition in this otherwise classically framed film, in which two black habits join in the foreground to make a "V" shape, with Sister Mary's face centered in the middle, as if in a cameo necklace. It is a devotional image, but this is not a religious psalm, but a love song.

Her eyes are shaded downward as she trills the lyrics, which roughly translate to: "Spring breezes whisper and caress loving couples/Streams rush by/But they are not as swift as my heart". As she winds the song to a close, her voice lowers. But she inches up her head and finally sees O'Malley, which makes her voice fly up the scale to hit her highest note, which breaks up into a chuckle and a grin: "Oh, Father O'Malley!" In recognizing his gaze, she breaks the spell, but the tenor of their relationship has changed.

Their reciprocal glances continue to build in intensity, as word comes down that Mary will be transferred to another convent out West. It is ordered by her doctor, but O'Malley has to pretend it was his decision. This betrayal of trust triggers her shift from secular to spiritual, folk song to prayer. Before her departure, she kneels in the chapel. Her eyes are directed upwards as she pleads, "Dear Lord, remove all bitterness from my heart." It is a rare acknowledgment of God's presence in a film otherwise occupied with the physical. As she passes by O'Malley outside the doors of the convent, her stare is unwavering, as she searches for some flicker of regret in his face. But there is none.

Father O'Malley says goodbye to Sister Benedict

As she is about to depart, her prayer is answered. O'Malley calls her back, and gives her the truth. He did not order her re-assignment. Sister Mary closes her eyes in ecstasy, a beaming smile lighting up her face. She simply says, "Thank you, father. You've made me very happy." They hold each other with their gazes, neither breaking away. For the first time their looks are equal. This is as close as they can come to a declaration of love.

Aware of the erotic tension of this goodbye, Ingrid Bergman planned a practical joke on the final day of shooting. In one of the last takes she threw her arms around a stunned Crosby and kissed him passionately on the lips. Reportedly one of the priests on the set jumped up and yelled, "You can't use that!" McCarey didn't, but this missing negative should be as sought after as the original cut of The *Magnificent Ambersons.*

Something else to pray for.

R. Emmet Sweeney

Walt's First Park

There were Crosby mentions recently on the web site of the Disney History Institute. (www.disneyhistoryinstitute.com/). Todd James Pierce & Paul F. Anderson have been researching Walt Disney's career and there was a Bing involvement of which we were previously unaware. Here are the relevant extracts from the article.

Let's start with a question.

What event in 1938 most changed Walt Disney?

For Walt the Filmmaker, the answer is obvious. The most important event of 1938 was the worldwide release of *Snow White,* his first full-length feature. The film was a global sensation, with receipts large enough to build a new studio and fund subsequent films.

For Walt the Celebrity, the most important event of

1938 was his departure from the Riviera Polo Club. From 1932 to 1938, Walt, an active man, focused his social and athletic interests on polo, a game that was popular with Hollywood celebrities and studio executives. After an accident on the field, Walt left the game, a departure that also carved a hole in his social life.

But for Walt the Dreamer, the most important event of 1938 was—Paul and I would argue—a little-known business venture he entered with Bing Crosby, a business whose sole mission was to build the largest sports and entertainment complex west of New York City.

For years now, I've been collecting information on this Disney/Crosby project—a project called Hollywood Sports Garden, one that Walt himself claimed to be "vitally interested in." The complex would hold a bowling alley, an ice rink, gym facilities, a stadium large enough for college and professional basketball games, as well as equipment and ramps to produce indoor skiing. Newspapers referred to it as an "amusement center." Local residents referred to it as a "public nuisance."

For me, the most interesting part of the story is this: Hollywood Sports Garden establishes that Walt's activity in these "amusement centers" predates Disneyland by nearly two decades—before *Dumbo*, before *Pinocchio*, before the eyes of Mickey Mouse were graced with pupils. Hollywood Sports Garden was, simply, the first large stone that created a path from celluloid castles to those that Walt built up from the ground.

In the fall of 1938—late October or early November—Walt and his friend, Bing Crosby took a meeting with the most famous sports promoter in Los Angeles, a minor legend named Zack Farmer. Farmer had built the LA Coliseum. He had also, with a million dollar bond, staged the 1932 Olympics, an event that, despite the Great Depression, proved highly profitable for the city. For the previous eight or nine months, Farmer had been looking for partners to create a massive sports and entertainment center in Hollywood, something he promoted as "the Madison Square Garden of the West." It would have a public area, as well as a private club for wealthy or celebrity members.

Walt's interest was quick. The project engaged him on multiple levels. *Snow White* had brought him wealth, money he wanted to spend or invest. He was also interested in exploring how the Sports Garden might be used for other types of popular entertainment, such as circuses. Lastly—and perhaps most importantly—he believed the private club at the Garden complex might, with a little guidance, prove a good replacement for the Riviera Polo Club. For years, Walt's social life had migrated toward celebrities, men such as Spencer Tracy and Will Rogers. He enjoyed their friendship, as well as the competitive energy that radiated out from the polo field. Walt loved polo; he would have continued with the game, except in a practice match during the previous year, a ball curved off the green and squared him between the shoulders, leaving him with a tremendously painful injury. Four cervical vertebrae were damaged. Walt likely believed that this Sports Garden—specifically its private club—would allow him to recapture the social life he had lost when he left polo.

Walt worked with Farmer and Crosby, as well as Disney lawyer, Gunther "Gunnie" Lessing. Within a month—even before business relationships had been solidified with a contract—the men established a plan to create Hollywood Sports Garden. They would create a new company, with Walt as president and Crosby as chairman. They would raise money by pre-selling private memberships to the inner "Gold" club, memberships offered primarily to men at various Hollywood studios. In Walt's own words, he wanted the club to be filled with "sports-loving motion picture people," more or less matching the social framework of the Riviera Polo Club.

In late November or early December, Walt, Crosby and Farmer met with Cpt. Allan Hancock, a wealthy oilman and landowner, to inquire about a lease on 34 acres at the edge of Hancock Park. The land, they felt, was ideal: it was a few blocks from the Pan Pacific Auditorium, a dimly-lit indoor venue capable of seating an audience of 6,000; it was also a few blocks from Gilmore Stadium, an outdoor football stadium that could seat 18,000. Farmer knew that this area—often referred to as the Gilmore Island section of Los Angeles—might soon have a new baseball stadium as well. Hollywood Sports Garden, assuming they built it, would be the crown jewel of Gilmore Island, what could soon be the city's premiere sports and entertainment district. Farmer explained to Hancock that they wished to build the largest sports and entertainment center in the country. He likely pointed out something that he'd previously discussed with Walt and Crosby, that this new sports-entertainment district might be an ideal location to hold a second Los Angeles Olympics in the not-too-distant future.

Starting on December 5, with only a vague plan, a handshake deal with Hancock, and a few pieces of concept art, Bing Crosby's brother, Everett (now acting as a project manager) held at least two press meetings—perhaps more—to build support. He announced that Walt Disney and Bing Crosby would build a $1.5 million sports complex in the center of Los Angeles—an undertaking so large it would make "Madison Square Garden look like a two-reel picture made in Poverty Row." Hollywood Sports Garden would host "virtually every type of sport—from ice hockey to jai lai," as well as present "rodeos, circuses, expositions, [and] conventions."

With Walt and Crosby at his side, Everett explained that the planning team for the Garden would include prominent Hollywood executives, notably the producer

Henry Hathaway and the director William LeBaron. Together they would also create a private club within the Garden, a special society that, reporters sensed, was particularly important to Walt...The *LA Times* proclaimed it the "world's largest roofed stadium...which surpasses by many thousands the [seating] accommodations at Madison Square Garden and Chicago Stadium."

At the end of one conference, Everett made an announcement that revealed, despite Zack Farmer's business experience, a substantial naïveté at the center of this group: even though no lease had been signed, no contracts drawn to formally establish this new organization, Everett told the press that "construction on the project will begin within 90 days and it is expected that the edifice will be completed by late next summer."

In December 1938, when asked about his interest in Hollywood Sports Garden, Walt Disney explained, "I went into it as a form of diversion." But as 1938 dissolved into 1939, the Garden was far from a diversion; it was one central focus of Walt's life.

Walt, himself, was primarily responsible for fundraising—making initial contact with celebrities and executives at other studios for possible involvement in the private club. The business of membership sales, however, fell to two employees recently hired by Hollywood Sports Garden.

Zack Farmer, who had experience in project development, worked closely with the architectural office of Walker and Eisen to prepare "various drawings showing different views of the proposed structure," which then could be used to solicit investment. These same drawings would also be submitted to college and professional sports organizations to pave the way for future partnerships.

Richard Bailey, newly hired as secretary and treasurer, would complete applications so the proposed corporation could sell stock and memberships in the private club. He would also prepare advertisements, create an investors brochure, organize board meetings, and work to finalize the lease with Cpt. Allan Hancock.

An oilman from Huntington Beach, M.M. McCallen serving as vice president, would help form connections between the Garden and local investors outside of the studio system.

Bing Crosby, it seems, did little—other than attach his name to the project to create interest and legitimacy. He was, without question, the most famous man on the board.

By January 20, Walt, with the assistance of Bailey, had assembled 14 men—almost all film celebrities—to serve as directors for the private club. The list included the actors Jack Benny and George Raft, who was also offered the position of vice president of the club. Also on January 20, Zack Farmer was formally hired as an employee of the Garden, as the proposed corporation now had money to offer him a salary.

(l to r) Bing, Richard Bailey and Everett Crosby watch Walt Disney sign the lease.

...On February 9, Walt signed the papers to incorporate the Garden—papers that specifically stated that Walt Disney, though a significant investor, would have "no personal liability" for the Garden or the lease itself. That same day—after a satisfactory inspection of the land—Walt Disney, as president of the Garden, signed a 50-year lease on the Hancock property, thereby assuring a strong location in the desirable center of Gilmore Island. Hancock would countersign the lease four days later, finalizing the arrangement on February 13.

Paul F. Anderson

A photograph of Bing, Richard Bailey and Everett Crosby watching Walt Disney sign the lease accompanied the article.

So what happened? The article continues with details of fund raising, protest meetings and other complications. Problems with the local residents and the Planning Commission ultimately meant that the project became unviable and did not proceed. However, the experience must have been the inspiration for Walt Disney to build Disneyland in Anaheim, California in 1955.

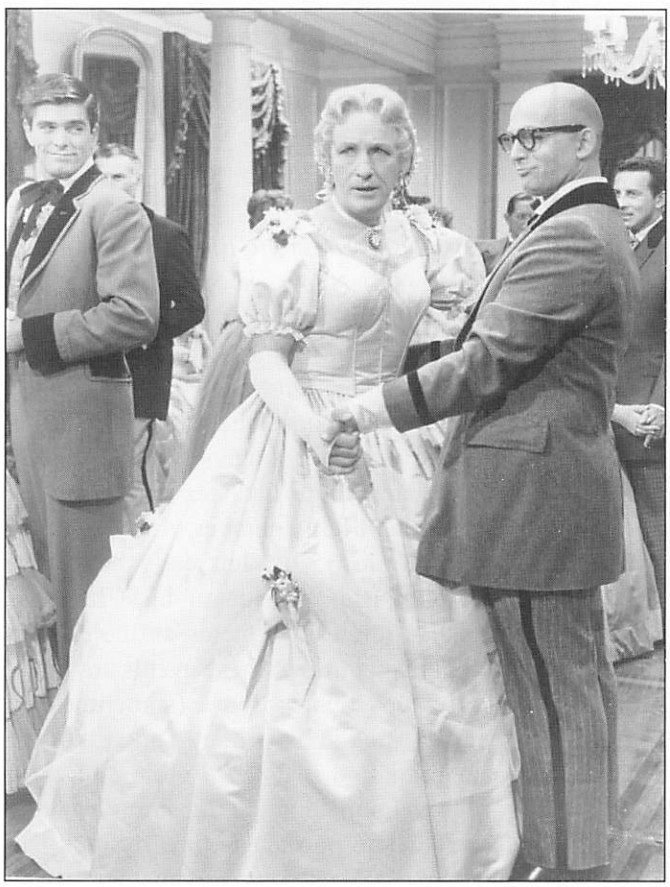
One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Roger Schore, by email to Greg Van Beek from New York, USA

Gavin MacLeod's memoir "This Is Your Captain Speaking" was recently published and in it is an example of Bing's thoughtfulness in praising his colleagues even years after working with them. Macleod appeared in *High Time* and in one scene, reproduced in the book, his character dances with Bing who's in drag. Regarding the period when he achieved success as the character Murray on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," he writes:

> "Fame also got me noticed by some people who really meant a lot to me. When Bing Crosby was in the hospital, not long before he died, Mary Tyler Moore went to pay him a visit. She came back and told me that Bing wanted her to tell me something: he was 'proud of me.' More than a decade had gone by since I'd had my moment with Bing on the set of *High Time*. I had no thought in my brain that a guy like that would ever remember who I was. But he did and he was PROUD of me. What a fantastic feeling that was."



A dance to remember for Gavin

Jim Determan, seen on the Crosby Fan World site on November 11.

I am reading *Kon-Tiki,* Thor Heyerdahl's account of his 1947 voyage by raft from South America to Polynesia, and when he finally lands on an out-of-the-way island off the Raroia reef, one of the first things the local chief asks him is if he knows Bing Crosby! This certainly shows how widespread Bing's fame was at that time.

Carolyn Schneider, by email from Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

The last issue of BING had an article from GQ magazine on page 26 that requires some correction and clarification. The person who wrote that article somehow got their wires crossed, because the term, "Canadian tuxedo", referred to there has nothing to do with Bing and the original denim tuxedo made for him back in 1951.

GQ is a magazine with a focus on men's fashion and not on history and not on Bing Crosby. Hopefully, GQ will admit to their error but I doubt it.

In any case, ICC members can be assured that the new Levi denim jackets currently being made are replicas of Uncle Bing's and have no connection with the Canadian fashion statement.

(Editor: Carolyn wrote again on February 26th with sad news.)

My uncle Ted Crosby's oldest daughter passed away a couple of days ago in Boston. Her name was Antonia, we all called her "Toni". She lived back East most of her life and therefore cousins like myself, lost touch with her. I think she had two daughters, and I'm afraid I don't know her married name. This leaves 11 nieces and nephews of Bing's in the family.

(Editor: Toni was born on April 26, 1926 and was christened Patricia Antonia.)

Frank Startup, by email from Cirencester, Gloucestershire, UK

I've just received the latest magazine, for which many thanks - another fascinating read, I'm sure. My subscription and donation is on its way to Michael now. I'm sorry to have missed Leeds this year, and hope to be able to make it next.

I thought you might find this interesting, sort of, if you haven't seen it already. It's from the latest edition of 'Private Eye' and their series 'Dumb Britain', which records the various witless answers given by contestants in radio and television quizzes. This is from BBC's

'Pointless', apparently:

Alexander Armstrong asked:

'His version of 'White Christmas' sold over one hundred million copies worldwide. He had the initials BC and his surname was the name of a town in the UK. Who is that?

The contestant, a student, answered:

'er.....Barry Carlisle?'

Difficult to know whether to laugh or cry, isn't it?

(Editor: In December, NBC placed a clip from Gene Shalit's interview with Bing in 1976 on to their web site. [Further details in "Bing on the Box"] Noticing this, I sent the link to those Crosby friends whose email addresses I had and there were some interesting responses. Here are two of them for you to read.)

Ken Barnes, by email from Essex, UK

Seeing Bing in 1976 brought back warm memories of the period in which I had the privilege of working with him. I clearly remember being present when that family photo was taken at the London Palladium. Happy times indeed. Anyone who described Bing as being cold and aloof should have been around at the Palladium. He was warm and communicative with all his fellow workers and generous to fans and autograph hunters.

Alan Matheson by email from Vancouver, Canada

Many thanks for this wonderful TV clip. I missed this the first time 'round so it's great to see this all these years later. This is an excellent interview as others have mentioned but the improvised "a cappella" good-bye that Bing sings is absolutely priceless. Bing, of course, was one of the most prepared and polished of performers throughout his career and at the same time, his jazz roots and abilities as a true improviser were never far away as demonstrated time and again on radio airchecks and on this wonderful clip from the *Today* show. His willingness to go along with improvising a "good-bye" to Gene Shalit (and adjusting his singing key in perfect transposition as he goes) is a remarkable testament to his innate musicality and flexibility. Bravo to you for sending this around to all of us and bravo to NBC for posting this on their website. For anyone for whom Bing matters (and for those just discovering him), this clip provides a remarkable aural and visual look into an always creative musical mind.

Thanks also to you and your team for another great BING magazine. It's always something I look forward to and there were, as usual, excellent articles throughout the magazine. Wig's piece on the saga of the two famous "White Christmas" recordings was really thought provoking and I'm inclined to agree with him that it's likely that Jack Kapp and/or Decca wanted an updated version of this tune (and the others) in Bing's "1947" voice. Wig's thesis is certainly supported by the remakes Decca did before 1947 of such early thirties titles as "It Must Be True" and "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams". In those cases, the original versions by Bing were owned by RCA Victor of course but one can imagine Jack Kapp considering Bing's late thirties/early forties voice as a useful sales factor. The precedent of Decca re-doing earlier Crosby material was well established by the time the 1947 "White Christmas" was done. I was interested in the fact that Decca forbade Bing's recording "White Christmas" for any other label. This was exactly the same issue for Artie Shaw and his version of "Begin the Beguine" which had been such a big hit for him and RCA Victor. Due to a contractual obligation Shaw was not allowed to record this piece for another company and subsequently ran into trouble when he re-recorded "Begin the Beguine" for Musicraft Records in 1946. The 1946 version had to be withdrawn and was a rather rare recording for a number of years. It's too bad that this issue stood in the way of Bing re-recording "White Christmas" although we do have the excellent version he did in 1955 for the "Christmas Sing With Bing" broadcast and LP (thank you Sepia Records for making this last item available once again). Bing's final version from his last Christmas TV special in 1977 never fails to touch me as well.

I've just ordered the two newest BCE CDs ("Le Bing" and the Johnny Mercer collection) along with the new DVD of *Going Hollywood.* Until I'd read "Keeping Track" in the current issue, I wouldn't have known that *Going Hollywood* was back out again as a DVD. I'll be looking forward to seeing this as my VHS copy is "missing in action" at this point.

I hope that you and your family have a wonderful Christmas holiday and a great New Year. Many thanks for all that you and the Bing team do to keep things going in matters of things "Bing".

(Editor: Alan continues to promote Bing in the various series of lectures he undertakes. In December he had just finished presenting a 6-week jazz history course on jazz vocalists as part of a University extension program aimed at seniors. He told me that:)

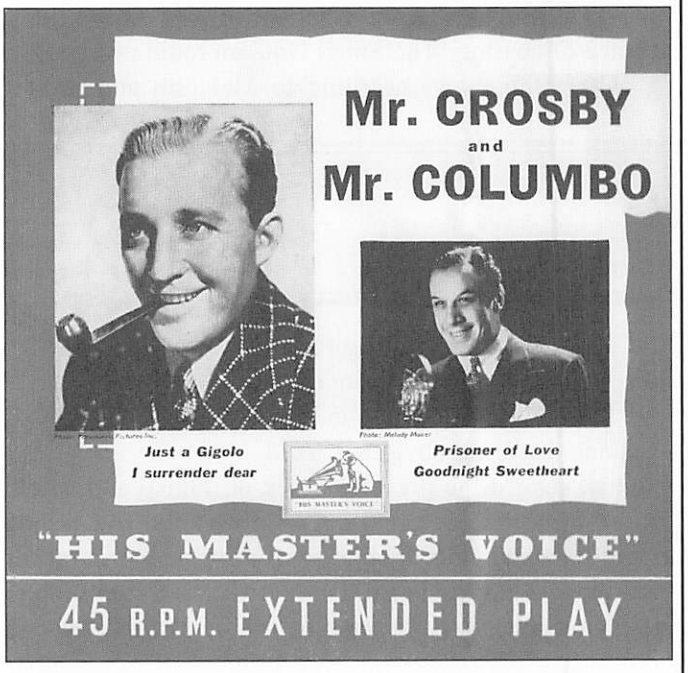
"Bing figured more than once and with good reason due to his influence on other singers and his highly personal way of "channeling" the jazz influences he absorbed throughout his life. A number of my listeners (whose ages ranged from 65 to their early 80s) were really unfamiliar with Bing outside of his Christmas repertoire. This is an interesting factor as the current "senior" population that comes to these events are in the 65-70 age range so too young to have (sometimes) to have been listeners to Bing in his prime or the rest of the big band era groups. I find that these proto and early "baby boomers" grew up making the transition from the Guy Mitchell/Perry Como pop music to early rock and roll (which of course makes sense given their likely birthdates).

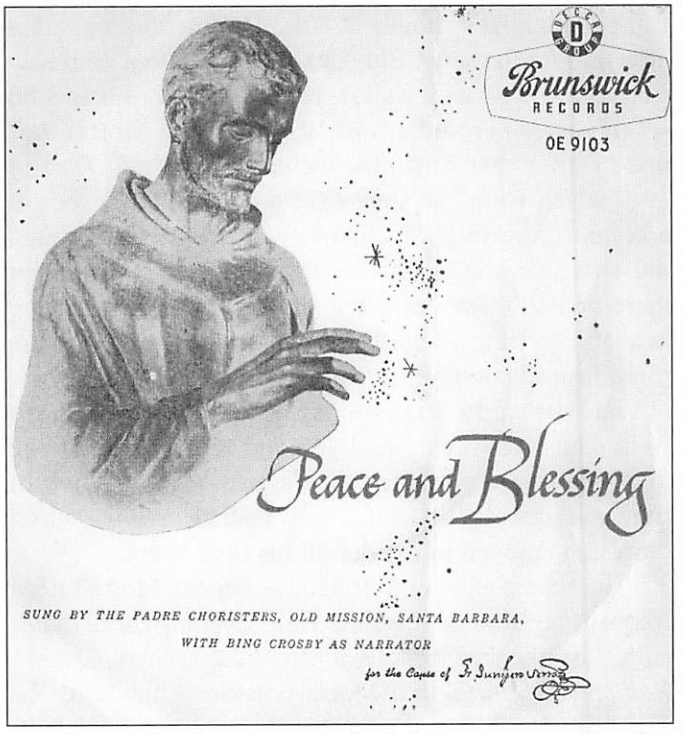
What's good about all that is I'm able to really open some doors on the great pre-rock popular and jazz

singers that they will not have heard of or (in the case of Bing) have relegated to a limited understanding. After presenting some important jazz singers from the last two decades (i.e. Esperanza Spalding et al) I wrapped things up with the 1959 TV version of "Now You Has Jazz" with Bing, Louis Armstrong, Peggy Lee and Frank Sinatra. The audience "fell out" and applauded heartily for the filmed performance. A great way to end the lecture series and a great way to let more folks know about Bing's artistry.

John Bassett, Rochford, Essex, UK

Thank you for the copy of BING magazine (I loved the back cover!).





Upon glancing over my lists here, can you imagine how annoyed I am to discover that we've left out an EP from the "45" listings in the latest issue. Can you please make a mention in the next issue that the following item has been omitted:-

7" Brunswick EP: OE9430 "They Sold a Million" No. 14

This was a Christmas issue, by the way, and I have a mint copy of it. How it got overlooked I cannot imagine. And while you're about it, I've found a third issue of 45 single MCA111 with a different label design and picture sleeve.

I thought you would like to see these photocopied sleeves of two EPs that were given to me as Christmas presents. In my opinion, these two discs are the most rare of all Bing's UK issued EPs, and it has taken me 48 years to lay my hands on them!

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

Australian readers of the winter issue of BING magazine have several connections with some of its content.

The email from June Turnbull was, of course, very relevant to 'Down Under' because, as she noted, the song she composed as an eight-year-old became the theme song of the Melbourne radio station 3AW's All Australia Bing Crosby Club which was formed in 1945. 'It Is Crosby - Who Else Could It Be?' was not only recorded by Pam Corrigan as a duet with Melbourne vocalist Geoff Brooke but also by another prominent vocalist Doris Turner.

Keith Parkinson's report on *Going Hollywood* notes that the film was not reviewed enthusiastically in the United Kingdom. When it was released in Sydney in February 1934 one critic wrote that it 'develops enjoyable qualities of entertainment [after a slow beginning]' and that Marion Davies 'has inspired Bing Crosby to forget quite often the crooner in the actor'. Another critic was not impressed by Bing the actor, writing that 'It must be admitted that his voice has a certain luscious quality ... [but] now that he may be visually apprehended as well as heard, the personality erstwhile formidable proves to be very insignificant indeed'. The film was released here as *Cinderella's Fella*.

Ken Crossland's look at Bing's 45 rpm records reminded me that an Australian Festival 45 of 1958 with Bing's 'Gigi' with 'Trust Your Destiny to a Star' was withdrawn and replaced with 'Gigi' and 'Chicago', probably because the music publisher holding the rights to 'Trust...' demanded its withdrawal because the song featured in a TV musical *Aladdin* which had yet to be shown in Australia.

Bing Crosby and Christmas have long been associated in Australia although most Australians have never experienced a white Christmas.

Bing's recording of the Irving Berlin song was released here in June 1943, six months after we first saw *Holiday Inn*. It was backed by 'Let's Start the New Year Right' and three other discs with songs from the movie

were released concurrently. This Decca 78 remained on sale until 1956 and the 1947 recording was not pressed here as a single. As Wig Wiggins suggested, Australia might well have been a source of a master for the 1942 version if Jack Kapp really wanted it.

Bing's 'A Christmas Sing with Bing around the World' was released here on a Festival twelve-inch LP in 1957.

Our daily national newspaper *The Australian* remembered Bing just before last Christmas in its weekend edition. A lengthy article titled 'Seducer with a Song' dealt not with Bing but with the Canadian singer Michael Bublé who apparently 'During his pre-school years, growing up in Burnaby, British Columbia...would spend much of the festive season immersing himself in the soothing croon of Bing Crosby, whose White Christmas album was a family favourite'. Bublé said 'listening to a guy like Bing Crosby I was also listening to incredible musicians...wonderful arrangements'. A photo of Bing accompanied the article.

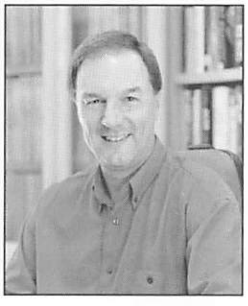
The same newspaper's edition on Christmas Eve suggested 'Christmas images lift our minds'. Pondering the origins and images of Christmas, the writer urged readers not to forget the heritage: 'When we hear the strains of Bing Crosby singing 'White Christmas' it's difficult to resist the pull, even if we're trying to escape mountains of supermarket turkey and plum pudding as we hear them. Crosby had a beautiful speaking voice as well. Back in the days of radio he recorded "The Small One", the story of the donkey who ended up playing his role in the nativity story.'

Regretfully, I expect that Australians have little chance of hearing 'The Small One' on radio nowadays.

One of the joys accruing to Malcolm and myself

CROSBYANA

Ken Crossland takes a look at all things Bing

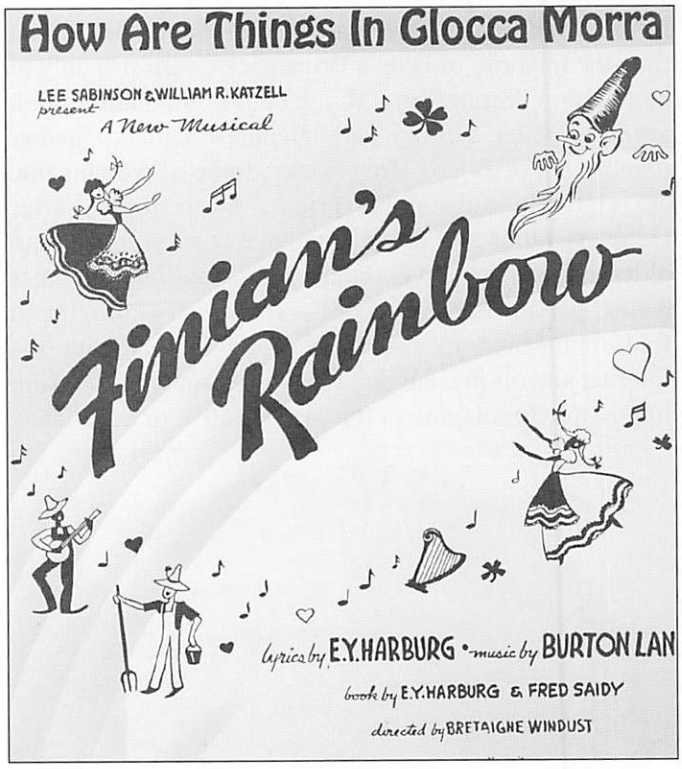


during our work on *Late Life Jazz,* our biography of Rosemary Clooney, was the serendipitous unearthing of new pieces of Crosbyana. One such was Rosemary's recollections of Bing's unique and highly personal vocabulary. She recalled the way he had written his own script for the dialogue between them in the scene in *White Christmas* that leads up to their "Count Your Blessings" duet. "Grab the cow," he says, meaning bring the milk, as they head for the open fire, one of several pieces of phraseology in the scene that were pure Bing. A few years later, when they were working on *Fancy Meeting You Here*, Rosemary could be heard to giggle spontaneously on some of the issued takes when Bing slipped in an unexpected one-liner. When one duet called for a reference to "breakfasting with Bardot", Bing tossed in the comment that someone should knit her "a hug-me-tight". "What the hell is a 'hug-me-tight'?" Rosemary asked many years later, still enjoying her amusement at the line.

Bing's way with a phrase was one of the most endearing features of his years on radio, particularly in his introductions to songs. After all of the years of listening to his radio work with Buddy Cole, often in debatable quality, the pristine Mosaic recordings are of course wondrous to have, but I still find myself unable to part with some of the old stuff, purely because they include priceless pieces of Crosby verbiage. All of which brings me, somewhat indirectly, to the subject of this column.

During Bing's 1947 Philco season, he offered three separate renditions of a new song from Burton Lane and Yip Harburg's score for *Finian's Rainbow.* "In the 'Hooray-for-the-Irish Department'", said Bing on April 16, 1947, "they have a number that is literally sweeping the country." Only Bing could have come up with a "Hooray for the Irish Department". The song was one that Bing obviously liked. He had sung it the previous week on Philco and would do so once more before the season was out. Everything about the song – its Irishness, its sentimental quest for news from home and its lilting melody, all suited Bing to a T, but it was his Decca stable mate, Dick Haymes who took it into the *Billboard* chart, beating off competition from Columbia's Buddy Clark. Despite his apparent affection for the song, Bing never returned to it until Ken Barnes came up with a show tunes theme for his second set of London recordings in 1975. "Glocca Morra" was one of a number of songs, included on *At My Time of Life,* which Bing had sung over the years but never got around to recording. The majesty of that 1975 rendition must make any Crosby fan thankful that Haymes got there first all those years before, thus rendering the song available to Bing all those years later. Accustomed to the often insipid compromises that marked many of Bing's 60s and earlier 1970s sessions, his reading of Harburg's lyric and the vocal strength and elasticity that he displays, easily puts the recording into the top five of Crosby-Barnes collaborations from that graphic sunset that Bing enjoyed in London in his final years.

But where exactly in Ireland is Glocca Morra? It's a frequent question still on the web. The answer is that it isn't. Just like the US state of Missitucky, where *Finian's Rainbow* is set, Glocca Morra is entirely fictitious. Its mythical status is well concealed. Harburg's verse talks about "a Londonderry bird", whilst his little brook runs down through "Killybegs, Kilkerry and Kildare", all of them real places. A more telling answer to the question

might be that Glocca Morra can be found on the northern tip of the Isle of Innisfree, which doesn't exist either. Some people make the mistake of thinking that it's the same isle that W.B Yeats wrote about in his poem "Lake Isle of Innisfree" in 1888, which was actually an island on Lough Gill in County Sligo. Not so. Bing's "Innisfree", recorded in 1951, was altogether more contemporary, written the year before by Dick Farrelly, a policeman turned poet, or vice-versa. Farrelly did later explain that his isle was intended to be a symbolic representation of all-Ireland, thus perhaps rendering it less fictitious, if such a thing is possible, than "Glocca Morra" which was never intended to be anything more than two words on a song sheet.

How Are Things In Glocca Morra
LEE SABINSON & WILLIAM R. KATZELL present
A New Musical
Finian's Rainbow
lyrics by E.Y. HARBURG • music by BURTON LANE
book by E.Y. HARBURG & FRED SAIDY
directed by BRETAIGNE WINDUST

Farrelly's song gained immortality when film director John Ford heard its soothing melody and adopted it – with no on-screen credit – as the theme for *The Quiet Man*, his 1952 film that starred John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara and which delivered Ford his fourth *Best Director* Academy Award. And as with "Glocca Morra", its range, melody and sentimentality were perfectly suited to Bing's midlife persona and vocal style. Strangely though, Bing seems to have sung the song in the Decca studios in December 1951 and then left it untouched for 15 years – not even a plug on his Chesterfield show – before reviving it as part of his 1966 TV special *A Little Bit of Irish* where he dedicated it to the memory of Barry Fitzgerald. There is little to distinguish the two versions except that in 1966, Bing adopts the pronunciation of Innisfree as though it were written "Innishfree", something that most of the Irish performers who recorded the song in the intervening years, also do.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, Bing's recording of "Isle of Innisfree" has an unanticipated claim to immortality because it formed part of the first Top Ten Hit Parade ever published in Great Britain. Published by *New Musical Express* in November 1952, the chart has been seen by many as the effective starting point for popular music in Britain. One such is a music journalist on the London *Times,* Bob Stanley. Mr. Stanley is not one of my favourite writers, as he seems to suffer from the modern-day myopia that says that if something didn't happen in the writer's living memory, then it can't have happened at all. So, when last year, he published *Yeah, Yeah, Yeah: The Story of Modern Pop*, I picked up the book with a degree of trepidation. Stanley's starting point is indeed the 1952 chart and he offers a short essay on the records and performers who made up the Top Ten. Bing's "Innisfree" sits at No. 8. To his credit, Mr. Stanley's research has been good. Bing, he says, was the "biggest singing influence in pop before 1952" and the king of the singers since the later twenties. More interesting to us though is Mr. Stanley's observation that despite clocking up an untouchable 341 chart entries in the USA, "Isle of Innisfree" was not one of the 341. Because we have no British counterpart to *Billboard* before 1952, we have no way of knowing how many of the 341 were hits in Britain – one imagines that most of them were - nor indeed how many other records set the path of being a hit in Britain and a miss in the States.

What we do know is that after "Innisfree", the same thing happened again. "Zing a Little Zong", "Changing Partners", "Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep", "Stranger in Paradise", "In a Little Spanish Town", "True Love" and "Around the World" all made the British charts during the middle years of the Fifties, whilst only two of them - "Changing Partners" and "True Love" - scored back home. And Bing pulled it off one more time. From the same sessions in February 1975 that produced the peerless rendition of "Glocca Morra",

"That's What Life Is All About" became Bing's final chart entry in his lifetime, but only in Great Britain. Bing was not the only performer to discover truth in the old adage that as one door shuts another one opens. Rosemary Clooney found that as her hit-making days in the US started to peter out in 1954, they were only just beginning in England. Perry Como did the same, landing a massive UK hit in 1960 with "Delaware" – a song for the US market if ever there was one – only for it to die without trace in its homeland. Something to do with the "'Hooray for the English Department", Bing might have said.

Ken Crossland

John Newton - Crosby Collector

Richard Baker writing on the Crosby Fan World site in October had this to say as he introduced a letter from Crosby Collector par excellence, John Newton.

There are many types of collectors. I am a collector of records. But I collect records mainly as a vehicle for conveying the music and do not greatly care about the medium by which the music is delivered.

But then there are the REAL collectors, for whom the original source is the prize to pursue. In the realm of book collecting such collectors prize first editions. The parallel in record collecting is the original pressing (frequently of 78s, in the context of Bing), or even better, the ultimate prize, a test pressing or error (or "fluff") or some characteristic that makes the item hard to find.

Not, I emphasise, a mere copy in LP, CD or digital format but the original (sometimes unique, on a white label with handwritten identification).

These collectors have to be treasured by the rest of us, for in the main, they share their collections: they preserve their treasures and make their pristine originals available to the rest of us via issues on CD. By their very existence these collectors have preserved that which might not have been preserved, or only survived in poor condition. Some of them add additional items, extending the scope of their collection to photos, sheet music, posters and much other material to flesh out the overall story, creating a veritable museum.

There have been and remain a number of these collectors in the Crosby community, and their names are known to many of us. One of them is John Newton.

Richard Baker

John writes:

My Crosby collection had its beginnings slightly more than 50 years ago. When I was barely into my teen years, I had begun to "collect" old records that I would find in dusty stacks while accompanying my father on his hunts for his book collection. My earliest record collection revolved around the music of the First World War, but this quickly and dramatically changed when I found my first Brunswick record by Bing Crosby.

Bing's 1931 recording of "I Found a Million Dollar Baby" changed everything for me, and little could I imagine at the time how that recording - and how it hit my ears - would have an impact that has lasted for about five decades, and still shows no sign of diminishing. Of course one record lead to another, and yet another in quick order. But, in those days it was much more difficult to locate certain recordings. Younger collectors, who might have begun collecting in the 1970's or later, had a goodly number of "re-issue" long-play records to provide many of Bing's recordings from the 1930's, but in the very early 1960's there were few LPs available that contained the wondrous recordings from Bing's "Brunswick Period". Several were available, but at that time the majority of Bing's Brunswicks were still only to be found in 78rpm form - if you could find them. It took years of letter writing and telephone calls to gather together all of Bing's Brunswicks, some of which came at relatively substantial prices. Even today, after countless attics and basements have been emptied, and older collections have found their way into younger hands, certain Crosby records remain very difficult to find in original release form... and that is with the Internet and on-line auctions providing sources that were impossible to imagine in the early 1960's, or even later.

A special Brunswick record presented to Bing by Jack Kapp... as a gag or joke. "Bill Williams" was the name of Bing's character in the film Going Hollywood. Note that label has no catalog number. The recordings, "After Sundown" and "Beautiful Girl" are the same as the regular Brunswick issues.

But, even with the enthusiasm of youth, gathering Brunswicks. Victors, Columbias and Deccas, there was much to continually learn and discover. And, a couple of

years after I began collecting Bing's recordings, I obtained a record that was to again change my collecting focus and significantly alter what I began to search for. By way of a sales list from a record dealer during 1966 or 1967 (I forget exactly), I noted a Bing record for sale listed as "'Please' 12-inch Victor Record with Announcer = $10.00".

In those days, $10.00 was a lot of money for a record. A brand new Beatles LP cost only $2.98 when released, so $10.00 was a significant price for an old 78rpm record. I remember convincing my parents that this would be an advance Christmas present, or something like that, and I had a feeling that this record would be "something special". Since my father was a book collector, and had a "collector's mentality", he seemed to understand and agreed to my suggestion. And, when the record arrived (and it barely survived its trip through the mails), it really was something special.

The record was (and is) a wonderful recording, one of a pair of recordings that Bing made to advertise and promote his first starring feature film, *The Big Broadcast*. It doesn't use sound-track recordings, as later became the practice for such "Exploitation" records. This, and others made for Bing's first three feature films, was specially recorded in the Hollywood studios of RCA Victor, using cast members and the Paramount Recording Orchestra, directed by Nathaniel Finston. By the end of 1933, studios had begun to use sound-track recordings for such purposes, and occasionally used alternate sound-track recordings that are different from the sound-tracks of the released films.

My obtaining Bing's 12-inch Victor recording of "Please" (with composer Sam Coslow announcing) made me begin to wonder if such records were produced to advertise other Crosby films... and this lead to a never-ending search for what I call "Movie Studio Discs", records that were made for the film studios and were never intended to reach the public. There are several types of these studio records. Some were made to advertise films in theatre lobbies or over the radio, and many collectors assume that all such records were made to promote the films, but that is definitely not the case. Some of these sound-track pressings were pressed for internal use by the studios during the production phases of the films for which they were recorded. Others were made for rehearsal purposes or "play-back" purposes, while yet others were made as "demo" discs. Some earlier pressings were "synchronous" discs, used to supply the sound-tracks for films in theatres that still used the "sound-on-disc" process for exhibiting films (similar to the Vitaphone process).

Since none of these types of records were produced for the general public, they all have varying degrees of rarity. Some, particularly some radio promo discs, are relatively common among collectors, while some of the records produced for studio use are quite scarce and extremely rare.

Some of the movie discs in my collection are so scarce that I've only seen one or two copies in almost 50 years of searching for such things. In overall volume, it may not sound like much, but the collection contains about 250 examples of Bing's "movie discs" (I counted to over 240 or 250 several years ago, and decided to stop counting. What's the point? I keep searching for additions to the collection. And these numbers don't include duplicate copies that are available for trade with other collectors.)

Property of
United Artists Corporation
PRODUCTION 4250 REEL No. 7
Set No.
Times Played
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10
Times Played
11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20
REACHING FOR THE MOON
United Artists Corporation
Pressed By
RCA Victor Company, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey
MADE IN U. S. A.
Pat. in U.S.A. No. 1437062. Great Britain 263500 of 1925. Australia 26023 Nov. 19, 1925. India 11781 of 1925. Japan 74467 Nov. 21, 1927. Idah Free State 263500 of 1925.

Early 16-inch sound synchronous disc (Reel containing Bing's vocal) "When The Folks High Up Do The Mean Low Down".

I cannot say that I single-handedly accomplished the gathering of all the Bing material in my collection. Many friends and acquaintances, as well as numerous record dealers, have contributed to my collecting mania in many ways, both great and small. Many of the friends who are still with us will go un-mentioned, since I haven't asked for their permission to publish their names; but there were also good friends who have passed on and their own collections ultimately provided significant additions to my collection that I otherwise might never have obtained.

Two such friends, who many older Crosby collectors might have known, provided significant additions to my collection. I met both of these gentlemen back in the mid-to-late 1960's, initially through correspondence and telephone calls and later through personal visits. At the time we first met, both were already well-known among Crosby circles.

Howard Levine, a good friend who passed away several years ago, had an encyclopedic knowledge of all things Bing. Howard worked at Decca Records in the days of Jack Kapp and, later, Milt Gabler, legendary record producers. Some of the "special" records in

Howard's collection had been given to him during his years at Decca: Test pressings, Private recordings, et cetera, et cetera. (Howard personally produced the "Bing's Hollywood" series of LPs for Decca many years ago, as well as the 2-LP set "For Collectors Only", in collaboration with another celebrated collector.)

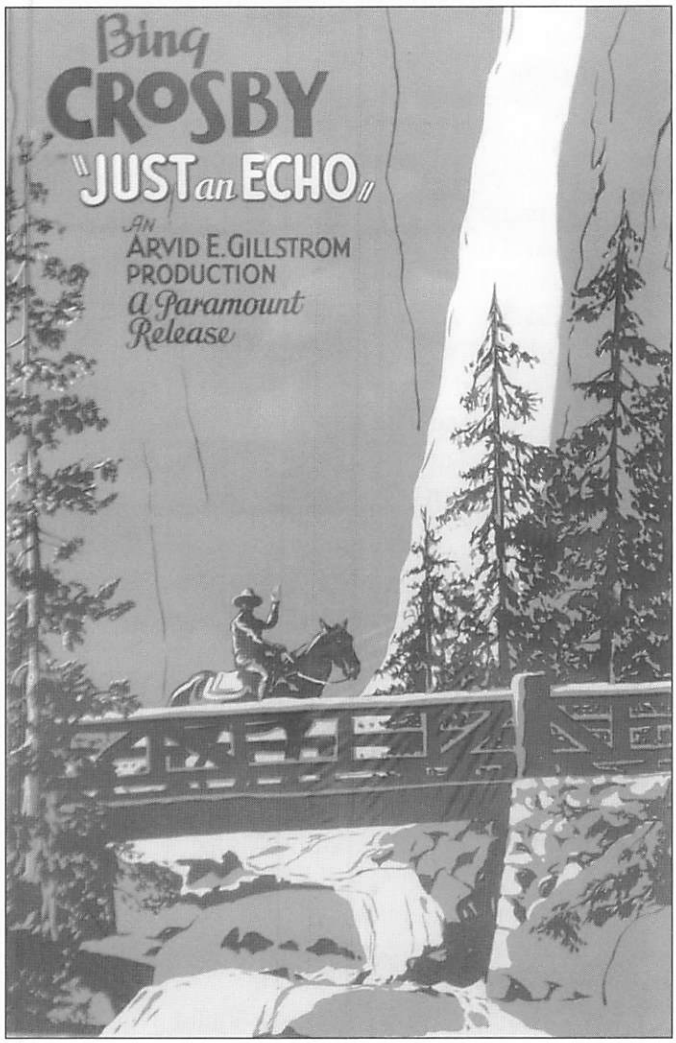
About 10 years ago, during a telephone conversation, I happened to mention that I still "needed" several movie discs that Howard had in his collection. While Howard wanted to maintain his complete collection of all of Bing's commercial records, he suggested that he'd be agreeable to allow me to buy whatever NON-commercial Crosby records I might want. I ultimately purchased several dozen of Bing's movie discs (all that he had), as well as scores of test pressings, many of which were used in producing the Jonzo series of CDs.

Jack Souther was another legendary Crosby collector, having begun his collection in 1945. Jack's collection included many, many rarities that he'd gathered together in almost 60 years of avid searching for Bing material. Of course there were several dozen movie discs, but also all other imaginable types of Crosby records: Private recordings, test pressings, transcriptions, and so on.

Many of Jack's rarities also originated with record industry sources, including Bing himself. Some of the records in Jack's collection had originally belonged to Jack Kapp, while others had belonged to Joe Perry, known as "Decca Joe", A&R man for Decca during the 1930's and 40's, after following Jack Kapp from Brunswick in 1934. Jack was also present at the Crosby Estate Sale in San Francisco during 1982, from which even more rarities found their way into Jack's collection.

Whatever went into Jack's collection, stayed in Jack's collection, although we occasionally did some trading over the years. About 6 years ago I received a call from Jack one evening. He advised that he'd been diagnosed with a terminal and inoperable medical condition. He also advised me that he knew and understood the scope of my Bing collection, and wanted the Bing rarities that he'd so lovingly gathered to go "to a good home, where they'll be appreciated for what they are." We spent much time on numerous telephone calls, all concentrated upon Bing Crosby records. Ultimately, at least a dozen large boxes of records made their way from San Francisco to Delaware, all double-boxed for protection, and each and every box containing more rarities than the average collector might see in a decade of collecting.

In addition to these departed friends, who are sorely missed, there were many other record collecting adventures that added to the collection. A number of years ago, while visiting a flea market in the Los Angeles area, I happened to start chatting with an elderly fellow who was looking through a stack of old records. Our conversation soon divulged that he was retired from Paramount Pictures. Naturally, I asked if he had ever come across any Paramount discs featuring Bing.



An original poster for Bing's short, *Just An Echo* which is believed to be among the rarest of Crosby movie posters.

The answer was "yes", he had some discs in his garage that had been given to him by Ellsworth Hoagland, who was film editor on *Holiday Inn*... A week or so later, a package arrived containing a group of Paramount play-back discs from both *Holiday Inn* and *Birth of the Blues*, all because of a chance encounter 3,000 miles from home.

Another interesting experience occurred a few years ago when I noticed a couple of scarce Paramount discs on eBay. I sent a note, asking if the seller happened to have any others of this type. He sent back a telephone number, and when we spoke, I learned that he had a number of great Paramount Studio records. He told me that he had attended an estate sale, and the owner of the home had been the daughter of Nat Finston, who was musical director at Paramount from about 1930 through 1935 or so. He had a stack of these records, many featuring Bing, and he read the titles over the telephone. We arranged a sale then and there, and shortly afterward a couple of parcels arrived containing some wonderful

records. I found it very interesting that I was holding Nat Finston's personal copies of Paramount discs from the early 30's. Amazing!

All of this, of course, is merely a recounting of the highlights of many years of mundane searching, much of which is fruitless, but nevertheless occasionally produces wondrous things. From time to time I still miss my departed friends, but I also look forward to meeting "new" friends, who are also avid Crosby collectors. If possible, scheduled in advance and with time available, I generally welcome visitors, most of whom might spend a few hours immersed in listening to Crosby rarites.

John Newton **newtonjj2@aol.com**

RECORD COLLECTORS' "NIGHTMARES"

Paul Mason, writing in the Australian Bing Crosby Society newsletter for July / August last year, submitted his thoughts on the "joys" of being a collector in Australia.

Record Collectors in the bygone days of shellac "78's" were helped by the record companies' use of "matrix" numbers to identify their products.

It was the custom to mark [by etching or stamping or engraving] in the record centre circle just below the label a number denoting the place it was recorded, the number of that recording's place in the studio's recordings, and a dash [-] or slash [/] to show how many times the number was recorded before being passed for release.

For example, Bing Crosby's recording of 'Tain't So, Honey, Tain't So' with Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra was on Columbia matrix 146316, made in New York. The first 3 "Takes" 1,-2,-3, were made on 21st May 1928. These were all rejected for use and "Takes"-4,-5, 6 were made on May 23rd. Again these were all rejected and the final "Take"-9 was made on 10th June 1928 and subsequently issued.

Many of Bing's rejected "takes" of many numbers have since been released and collectors are often confused because the re-issues do not denote which "Take" is used. Also there have been "Pirate" recordings issued which do not show details.

In Australia in the early 1930's we could buy some Crosby recordings under different artist names. New Embassy label Record No. E144-A Arthur Beaumont "I Found a Million Dollar Baby" Matrix 6140-. This is certainly Bing Crosby, but the matrix details do not correspond with any other Crosbys. The New Embassy label was made for and sold by Cole's Stores in Australia. The reverse of the record is The Broadway Orchestra, 'How the Time Can Fly' matrix M12204 - which is the Melotone recording of the ABC - Brunswick Studio and vocalist Smith Ballew on 4th June 1931.

"I Found a Million Dollar Baby" by Bing was also issued on the Panachord label, Record No. P11981, this time under the name of Owen Cornell – see below.

Panachord label Record No. P11982 Owen Cornell "I'm Through with Love' again, certainly Bing Crosby. Other details are not available as the disc can't be found at this stage.

It is possible that there are other issues under these names. There are other oddities. Bing's 1942 recording 'Angels of Mercy' was originally issued only in Australia on Australian Decca Y5771.

In the "X" series, The West End Players usually covered Ambrose performances or Lew Stone performances, The Rhythm Kings covered English and American issues, [including some hard to find Al Bowlly vocals with Lew Stone and Felix Mendelssohn] and sides by The Casa Loma Band, Artie Shaw, Mike Riley, Jimmy Dorsey and others.

COLLECTING AUSTRALIAN 78 RPM RECORDS

Collecting 78 rpm records from the halcyon days of pre-war music is often fraught with difficulties. Here we obtained original masters from all around the world and issued the records often under very dissimilar performer names than those the same records issued in their place of origin, or in other countries.

Accordingly many issues now recognized as classic performances of their time, are often overlooked in junk shops because they carry an unfamiliar name on the label.

The Regal-Zonophone records in Australia carried many 'generic' names that could mask the identity of performers all over the world.

For example, under the title The Casino Royal Orchestra can be found recordings by American bands:- Anson Weeks, Freddy Martin, Leo Reisman, Henry King, Ted Fio-Rito, Little Jack Little, Hal Kemp, Abe Lyman, Lud Gluskin, Don Bestor, Russ Morgan, Johnny Green, Jimmie Grier, Artie Shaw, Jan Garber, Kay Kyser, Joe Rines, Claude Thornhill, Horace Heidt, Glenn Miller, Red Norvo, Jerry Blaine, Lawrence Welk, Guy Lombardo, Don Howard, Ben Selvin and Gene Krupa. The Lud Gluskin records include rare Buddy Clark vocals, and Mildred Bailey is heard on the Red Norvo sides.

English bands issued under this title include Joe Loss and Bram Martin, and vocalist Chick Henderson is heard on the Joe Loss sides. Another often used title was The Rhythmic Troubadors. This was not unique to Australia as some issues under this name were made in England. However its use in Australia was greater and included mainly English bands:- Stan Greening, Debroy Somers, Henry Hall, Geraldo, Bram Martin, George Scott-Wood, Joe Loss [many with Chick Henderson vocals], George Elrick, Harry Leader [some Chick Henderson vocals], Mantovani, Ronnie Munro, The Six Swingers, Sidney Lipton, Jack White and Lou Preager.

There was also at least one issue of Australian Jim Davidson and his ABC Dance Band. Other generic names used on the Regal-Zonophone label here were:- Corona Dance Band, Stellar Dance Band, Midnight Revellers, Midnight Minstrels, Denza Dance Band, Society Serenaders, Regal Old-Time Dance Orchestra, Regal Novelty Orchestra, The Regal Virtuosi, The Stage Orchestra, The Cavaliers, Regal Comedy Company, The Broadway Bandits Silver Screen Orchestra, Rhythm Kings Radio, Rhythm Rascals, Gypsy Accordion Band, Wally Bishop Band, Coral Islanders, and Melody Masters Mel Rose Band.

The use of generic names seems to have declined during the war years. In the Decca catalogue there are some examples of generic names, but not to the same extent as in the R-Z catalogue.

Paul Mason

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Films seen on TV since last time include:

Going My Way	TCM
High Time (several showings)	FXM
Let's Make Love	FXM
Road to Bali	TCM
That's Entertainment	TCM
The Bells of St. Mary's	TCM
The Princess and the Pirate	TCM
White Christmas (many showings)	AMC

There was a Bing connection in the December 11 edition of *The Middle,* the sitcom television series, airing on ABC. The mother, Frances "Frankie" Heck (played by Patricia Heaton), had bought a copy of the movie *White Christmas* on eBay so that the family could watch it on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately the copy was dubbed in German! It was very funny to see Bing and Danny Kaye apparently talking German. The episode ended with the family all looking at the Christmas tree while the song "White Christmas" played in German.

As mentioned in our "Letters" section, the NBC *Today* program put up its 'Blast from the Past' on its Holiday Guide web page in December and it was an excerpt from Gene Shalit's interview with Bing in December 1976. Bing described recording "I've Got the Girl" and suggested that his recording of "Silent Night" had probably outsold "White Christmas" which surprised the interviewer. At the end of the show, Bing was invited to sing a few words as a goodbye and he segued into a short parody of "Auf Wiedersehen, My Dear" which he last sang in 1932!

During March, Turner Classic Movies premiered more classic interviews from *The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson* and on March 11th, they showed Bing's one and only guest appearance with Carson from 1976. What would we do without TCM?

USA & Canadian Radio

The excellent **Bing's Basement** shows have been continuing on the *SiriusXM* 40s on 4 channel. Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Arne Fogel have put these together very well indeed by imaginatively finding songs to fit their particular theme each time. The November 16 show had a Thanksgiving focus and the tracks heard are shown below. All commercial recordings unless stated.

Y'All Come (GE Nov. 22, 1953) – Let's All Meet at My House – Talk about Thanksgiving (CBS show Nov. 25, 1954) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (CBS) – Thanksgiving appeal for Foreign relief – I've Got Plenty to Be Thankful For – The Waiter, The Porter and the Upstairs Maid (film version) – Come Share the Wine – Merci Beaucoup (CBS) – Thanks (KMH March 2, 1944) – Thanks (1933 film version) – Thanks (Phillip Crosby from Chesterfield, March 15, 1950) – Love in a Home – Let Us Break Bread Together – Thank You for a Lovely Evening – Over a Bottle of Wine (Chesterfield, Nov. 21, 1951) – That's What Life Is All About (March 17, 1976)

The show on December 14 focused on Disney and had Richard M. Sherman as a guest. Mr. Sherman is a songwriter who, jointly with his late brother Robert, wrote many songs for Disney which were used in films such as *Mary Poppins*, *The Jungle Book*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *The Slipper and the Rose*. They also wrote the Disney theme park song "It's a Small World (After All)". Even with a guest, I wondered how Arne and Robert Bader would fill a whole hour with Bing's Disney associations but they were more than equal to the task!

Whistle While You Work (KMH, Mar. 17, 1938) – Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah (Philco, Jan. 8, 1947) – Chat about Disney's live action film *The African Lion* (from CBS daily radio show, 1955) – One Song (KMH, May 5, 1938) – The Three Caballeros (with The Andrews Sisters) – You Belong to My Heart (fluffed version) - Solamente Una Vez (with Buddy Cole) – Blue Shadows on the Trail (commercial version) – Katrina (Chesterfield, Sept. 21, 1949) – Ichabod (commercial version) – Ichabod (story portion) – The Headless Horseman (commercial version) - Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo (commercial version) – Chim Chim Cheree (commercial version) – Bing, Ralph Bellamy and Bob Burns talk with Walt Disney (KMH, Feb. 8, 1940) – Hi-Diddle-Dee-Dee (An Actor's Life For Me) (with Walt Disney, Ralph Bellamy and Bob Burns – KMH, Feb. 8, 1940) – It's a Small World (edited) (Hollywood Palace, Oct. 31, 1967)

On the January 18 broadcast, Arne looked at Bing and the vocal groups and he illustrated the connection with the following tracks.

The Whiffenpoof Song – Get Me to the Church on Time – My Suppressed Desire – Dinah (1931) – Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long – Shoo-Shoo Baby (KMH, Jan. 6, 1944) – Do You Ever Think of Me (1940) – Don't Fence Me In (fluff version) – Pistol Packin' Mama – You Don't Have to Know the Language (Philco, Feb. 26, 1947) – Tell Me Why (with Four Aces) – People Will Say We're In Love – Oh, Tell Me Why – Lazy River / Paper Doll (with Mills Brothers, Chesterfield Nov. 9, 1949) – Paint Your Wagon medley (with The Supremes).

Most of these were commercial recordings but of the others the rarest was the complete "Paint Your Wagon" medley with Diana Ross and The Supremes. This had been pre-recorded for use in *The Bing Crosby Special* televised on October 23, 1968. One song however – "I Still See Elisa" – was deleted and not used in the actual broadcast. The full unedited medley had appeared on a promotional record in 1968 and then on the GAV Records CD "Bridge Over Troubled Water" in 2002 but it is still very rare.

The "Paint Your Wagon" medley with Diana Ross and The Supremes.

In February, the Bing's Basement series looked at Bing and Rosemary Clooney. I was unable to hear the broadcast and surprisingly this was not repeated. It does seem a shame that these excellent programs are not used by Sirius more than once. Arne Fogel supplied details of the songs played and these were:

Two to Tango (GE) – Indian Summer (GE) – Bing and Clooney dialogue (Chesterfield) – Easter Parade (GE) – It's Only a Paper Moon (GE) – Let's Call the Whole Thing Off (Crosby-Clooney Show) – Ford commercial (Ford Road Show) – You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To (Ford Road Show) – Fancy Meeting You Here – You Came a Long Way from St. Louis – September Song/As Time Goes By/Till We Meet Again (Crosby-Clooney session) – Crosby-Clooney Show opening (Crosby-Clooney Show) – Will You Still Be Mine (Ford Road Show) – Buffalo Gals – That Travelin' Two Beat – On a Slow Boat to China (Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Concert, 1976) – Open Up Your Heart (parody with Bing, Rosie and Bob Hope, GE) – Crosby-Clooney sing for Eastern Products (includes "What Takes My Fancy")

Arne Fogel's own Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is broadcast at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. and it can be picked up internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website (http://jazz88.mpls.k12.mn.us/). To give you a sample of one of the shows, Arne's November 9th broadcast was titled "Bing Sings: Songs by Irving Caesar" and the songs played were:

Sometimes I'm Happy - (recorded in 1956) - Tea for Two

(with Connie Boswell) - Swanee (1975) - Crazy Rhythm - Just a Gigolo - I Want to Be Happy
PLUS:
My Honey's Lovin' Arms (with The Mills Brothers) - Something Sort of Grandish (with Debbie Reynolds - Shadow Waltz - Well, Did You Evah? - (with Frank Sinatra) - The Song Is Ended - My Woman - Your Mother and Mine - The Meadows of Heaven - Tomorrow's My Lucky Day

SiriusXM again had Regis Philbin hosting the holiday pop up channel **'Bing Crosby Christmas Radio'** which ran from Dec. 20 to Dec. 26. As last year, the limited-run 24/7 channel featured vintage Crosby holiday radio programs from 1942-1962 with guest stars such as Rosemary Clooney, Judy Garland, Bob Hope, Orson Welles, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, The Andrews Sisters, Johnny Mercer, Ethel Barrymore and Edgar Bergen with his daughter, Candice. We heard Christmas shows from the Kraft Music Hall, Philco, Chesterfield and GE and the Screen Guild broadcasts of *Holiday Inn*, *The Bells of St. Mary's* and *Going My Way*. Several "Christmas Sings with Bing" were heard too as well as Bing reciting "The Night Before Christmas."

This year, for the first time, Kathryn Crosby and son Harry joined Regis for a very pleasant 45-minute Q & A session at SiriusXM's studio. They recalled their favorite Bing Christmas songs and the memories/stories behind them. Regis told his story about meeting Bing on the Joey Bishop Show in 1967. Kathryn was asked her favorite Crosby recording and she answered "White Christmas". Her favorite film? *High Society*. Harry enjoyed sharing the Christmas season with his father and he told us about going to see the recording of the Hollywood Palace show in 1965 and then unexpectedly being asked to sing "O Come Little Children" on it. Kathryn and Harry talked about Bing's WWII activities in response to a question and clearly Bing regarded these as the most rewarding times of his career. Regis asked Kathryn to recount her first meeting with Bing and she duly did so. Harry discussed his father's fall at Pasadena, the subsequent Palladium show and his death in Madrid. Kathryn explained that the family usually had Christmas twice each year – the first was the recording of the annual Christmas show and the second the family Christmas at home. Regis mentioned interviewing Vic Damone and said how pleased Vic was with a letter he had received from Bing praising his performance. Vic treasures the letter to this day and has kept it safely. Regis asked what else Kathryn and Harry could tell him about Bing and Harry quickly said, "He was a great dad." Discussing Bing's work with Bob Hope, Kathryn came in to say that Dolores Hope had told her that Bing, Dixie and the four children moved in with the Hopes after the Crosby home burned down in 1943 which was something hitherto unknown to most of us.

During the other Bing Crosby Christmas Radio broadcasts daughter Mary and son Nathaniel also shared memories of their dad and I particularly liked Nathaniel's description of how his father would call in at the local Post Office on Christmas Day (it used to be open in those days) and sing carols for the workers. The 2012 Christmas editions of 'Bing's Basement' were repeated too, having been slightly amended.

Greg Van Beek has been continuing his weekly radio series *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB and this is on for an hour each Saturday starting at 10 pm (CST) / 11 pm (ET). He always has a "Bing Sings" segment. Greg gave further details about his 100th show with Regis Philbin in his article earlier in this issue and we should also mention his broadcast on November 2 when he included the *Command Performance* show from June 3, 1944 with Bob Hope, Judy Garland, Bing and Frank Sinatra. Greg broadcast his 17th annual Bing Crosby Christmas Special on NRT on December 21 and played the following tracks:

The Christmas Waltz (1966) - Happy Holiday - It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas - Silver Bells (with Ella Fitzgerald) - And the Bells Rang - Here Comes Santa Claus (with Peggy Lee) - Santa Claus Is Coming to Town (with The Andrews Sisters) - The First Snowfall - Snow (with Danny Kaye, Peggy Lee, Trudy Stevens) - Sleigh Ride - Winter Wonderland (with Johnny Mercer and Rosemary Clooney) - Adeste Fideles - Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas - You're All I Want for Christmas - A Christmas Toast - Frosty The Snowman - Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer - The First Noel - White Christmas

You can tune in online at the www.1420thebreeze.com website or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to www.1420thebreeze.com and clicking on the 'audio archives' link.

We have previously mentioned that KEZW and the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado present the ***Star Spangled Radio Hour*** every Saturday night at 6pm. Hosts Rick Crandall and Dennis Spragg introduce live big band radio broadcasts from the 30s and 40s each week that likely haven't been heard since they originally aired. During December they broadcast three of Bing's *Kraft Music Hall* shows, the first from December 16, 1943 and then those for December 7 and 14, 1944. Each *Star Spangled Radio Hour* show is also available at www.kezw.com as a podcast for two weeks following the broadcast.

Ron Sexsmith, the Canadian singer-songwriter, had a very pleasant programme called "Bingcast" on JAZZ.FM91 in January. Ron, speaking warmly about Mr. Crosby, had been influenced by Bing in his childhood years and has since gone on to record some of the master's classics. The songs played were generally the well known ones and they were:

It's Been a Long, Long Time – I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams – Moonlight Becomes You – Don't Fence Me In – An Apple for the Teacher – I Surrender Dear (1939) – San Fernando Valley – Far Away Places – Pennies from Heaven – Blue Room – Heat Wave (1956) – Gone Fishin' (radio - with Louis Armstrong) – Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) – Where the Blue of the Night (1945)

Rich Conaty's long-running "The Big Broadcast" show from New York on WFUV puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s which of course includes Bing. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight (ET) and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

TV highlights - UK

Films seen since our last issue was prepared were:

Anything Goes (1956)	TCM
High Society	Channel5
Let's Make Love	Sky Christmas
Road to Bali	TCM
The Country Girl	Sky Greats
The Greatest Show on Earth	More4
The Joker Is Wild	TCM
White Christmas	Channel4 / Film4

In his second hand turban with his crystal ball in *Anything Goes.*

Sky Arts showed *The Legendary Bing Crosby* during the Christmas period and another Crosby mention cropped up in the *Live Celebrity Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* – Christmas Special on December 19. Viewers were invited to register for the chance to answer a question live at the end of the show and we watched with baited breath as Chris Tarrant phoned the lucky person and then asked this challenging question.

What kind of Christmas is Bing Crosby dreaming of in the classic song?

(a) Cosy (b) White (c) Festive (d) Happy.

The man's final choice was of course (b) and he won an incredible £55,000! He was unemployed at the time so it was particularly nice for him.

UK radio

The Crosby connection with Christmas had a huge impact on all the UK radio shows as usual during December.

The National Presenters

Desmond Carrington's nationally networked Friday night show picked up Bing's Christmas link by playing "We Wish You the Merriest" and "Looks Like a Cold, Cold Winter" during December. Desmond said that he had not heard the latter song before and he went on to thank Michael Crampton and the ICC for providing it. In subsequent shows, Desmond played "Moonlight Bay" (with Gary), "Well Did You Evah" and "The Three Caballeros".

Don Black, the multi award-winning lyricist, who has taken over the David Jacobs Radio2 slot on Sunday nights interviewed Irving Berlin's daughter Linda Emmett on his December 22 show and naturally he played Bing singing "White Christmas". Mr. Black presents a very enjoyable programme indeed and he plays Bing every now and again.

Clare Teal's show on Sunday nights has now been expanded to two hours and this has seemed to give her the opportunity to play more Bing. Commenting "You can't have a Christmas without Bing" she played the duet with Ella Fitzgerald of "Marshmallow World" from a Chesterfield show on her December 22 broadcast. In other broadcasts, she has given us "I've Got Five Dollars" – "Happy Feet" – "Stay with the Happy People" (with Ella) – "A Kiss to Build a Dream On" (fluff with Louis).

Singer **Michael Ball** has had a Sunday evening radio show for some time and he plays an eclectic selection of music but had not played Bing until his show on December 22. He has his own Singers Hall of Fame and Bing was inducted into it following a nomination by Jean Combellack of Bridgnorth who said:

> "Bing is mother's all-time favourite and I have fond memories of listening to Bing's LPs on our record player as we helped mam clean the house. Although I was a teenager in the seventies I grew to love those smooth Bing Crosby songs."

Michael responded with "Didn't we all Jean - thanks so much for getting in touch!" and then he played…what else, but "White Christmas".

Keith Richmond and John Marshall both advised me about Bing's recording of "White Christmas" being played on the ***Farming Today*** programme on BBC Radio4 on December 23. This is what Keith had to say.

> "I had a pleasant surprise when my bedside alarm clock radio (tuned into BBC Radio Four) came on this morning at a quarter to six with the *Farming Today* programme. And this Christmas it turns out pigs in Yorkshire are enjoying Bing Crosby's version of 'White Christmas'."

Keith supplied a link for me to listen to the programme and in it a farmer was saying how his frisky pigs calm down when "White Christmas" by Bing is played. The interviewer tested the contention by playing both Mr. Crosby's version and one by a punk rock band called *Stiff Little Fingers* and the test proved conclusively that Bing's version is the one that works with the pigs!

The local radio presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) still features

Bing on her Saturday night shows (10pm-midnight). Looking at her broadcasts for the whole of 2013, Anne told me that "Bing was number one again this year – requested by my listeners – second was Frankie Laine, third, Guy Mitchell." During the four months under review, Anne has kept up the good work and given us no less that 38 Bing songs. Wonderful! As always, there is a huge variation in the tracks she used going from "How Deep Is the Ocean" to "The Folks Who Live on the Hill" (which was played for your Editor) and "Crossing the Plains" (with Rosie).

She continues to welcome requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk.* There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast.

Bill and Angela Rennells on their *Harmony Nights* show had a steady batch of requests for Bing from our stalwarts Stan White, Ian Lawrence and Trevor and Pat Wagstaff. Pleasingly, this was buttressed by a veritable deluge in December for Bing's seasonal songs from a wide variety of other listeners. Like Anne, the tracks heard vary considerably from songs such as "If You Stub Your Toe on the Moon", "The Headless Horseman", "P. S. I Love You" (for Ian Lawrence – from the new BCE Mercer CD) – "I've a Shooting Box in Scotland" (re Pete Moore, Stan White suggestion) and "On the Very First Day of the Year" (per Stan White for Angela's birthday, Pete Moore link).

Harmony Nights is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. This show also has a "Listen Again" option. Email Bill and Angela with your Bing requests at *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk.*

"The Late Paul Barnes", the two-hour big band and jazz oriented show hosted by **Paul Barnes** continues to be heard over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. Paul had made a practice of discussing the Crosby calendar on the first Saturday of the month and building a Crosby spot around it. In November he duly described the photo and then played the "Song of the Month" which was "Mr. Meadowlark". Paul decided to have some fun so he played the amusing rejected version instead of the commercial release. This encouraged him to play another recording with Johnny Mercer, namely "Small Fry" before finishing the segment with "Moonburn". In December he made the sad announcement that this was the last Crosby calendar and he played "Jingle Bells" and then went on to feature songs from the Sepia CDs, "Shoo-Shoo Baby" (from the AFRS CD) and "Everything Happens to Me" (from the *Bing in the Hall* CD).

So we came to the first weekend in January and what would Paul do without a 2014 calendar? He simply got the 2013 calendar out again and played the song of the month which was "An Apple for the Teacher". Paul usually likes to highlight some of the supporting musicians and the cornet work of Andy Secrest was mentioned for that track. He then played "Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut Street" (highlighting pianist Charlie LaVere). Other songs played by Paul during the four months covered were "I've Found a New Baby" – "Pick Yourself Up" (Pete Moore tribute), "Happy Feet" (highlighting Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang) and "(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66" (with The Andrews Sisters).

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has a programme of big band swing and balladeers each Sunday from 3pm to 6pm. Long-standing ICC member Stan White regularly sends Howard the latest Bing CDs and we heard "My Ideal" (from the AFRS CD), "You're the Only Star in My Blue Heaven" (from 'Bing in the Hall' – Howard gave a nice plug for ICC before playing this) and "I Thought About You" (also from 'Bing in the Hall'). Howard played other Bing songs too such as "Be-Bop Spoken Here" (with Peggy Lee), "A Little Bird Told Me" (with Peggy Lee & Bob Crosby) and "Lydia the Tattooed Lady" (with Groucho Marx).

There's a "Listen again" facility too at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01hrptl. Email requests to *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk.*

Don't forget **Jim Reilly's** hour-long Bing show which continues on Angel Radio (www.angelradio.co.uk) on Tuesday nights at 10:30 p.m. UK time.

I suspect that there is plenty of Mr. Crosby on two other shows that like to feature our man but I don't have details. The shows are **Swingers & Singers** (Sun. 8-10p.m) presented by David Lowe on several BBC local radio stations in the South West (search under BBC Radio Devon for links) and **Memorable Memories with Mike Carey** (Sundays 4-6p.m.). Go to bbc.co.uk/derby for more details. There are listen-again facilities for both shows.

Finally, in talking about the local radio presenters, I must mention the passing of **Frank Wappat** who died on his 84th birthday on February 17. Frank was a huge Crosby fan and played Bing frequently on his award winning *Frank Wappat Music Show* on BBC Newcastle where he opened up his record vaults to take us on a trip down memory lane with a blend of music from the 30's, 40's and 50's. Wappat also founded the Al Bowlly Circle, Memory Lane Magazine, British Band-Leaders Club and The Thirties Club. He was the longest serving presenter on BBC Radio Newcastle, having started in 1970, following his first broadcasting via Radio 390 on the Thames Estuary. Mr Wappat had retired in 2010 due to ill health

Australia

It was good to note that *The Road to Hong Kong* was shown on the 7Two channel on January 21.

Carolyn Schneider, Bing's niece, was interviewed by phone by Michael Pavlich on the *Overnights* programme on ABC, Radio Australia on November 12. In a 35 minute interview which was occasionally interrupted by phone-in questions and comments, Carolyn shared memories of the uncle she knew. She said that she had no idea that he was famous when she was a young child. Carolyn went on to say that Bing paid to put her through college and then got her a job at Paramount Studios. During her time at Paramount, she lived at Bing's home. She was asked about the Gary Crosby book and Carolyn gave a very firm reply indicating that the book had been written for money without regard for the facts.

Mr. Pavlich had interviewed John Allan, President of the Australian Bing Crosby Society back in 2011 and

this can still be heard at:
http://blogs.abc.net.au/localradio/2011/06/all-things-bing.html

Michael had therefore some knowledge of Mr. Crosby and he said that his favourite duet of all-time is the Bing 'N' Bowie Christmas song. He felt that David Bowie had been very influenced by Bing's crooning but I'm not sure Mr. Bowie would agree! Carolyn gave a nice plug for the ICC and David Currington and all-in-all this was some useful exposure for the groaner. Carolyn's interview was placed on the Internet at:
http://www.abc.net.au/overnights/stories/s3889076.htm

Other radio exposure for Der Bingle included the "Bing sings Johnny Mercer" CD being prominently featured on Sydney's 2CH on February 1st. ICC member Lachlan McLean had supplied a copy of the CD to disc jockey Bob Rogers and over the course of an hour Bob played no less than 17 songs from it as he told some of the Johnny Mercer story.

Bob Rogers followed up with an interview with **Phil Crosby Jr** (son of Phil, grandson of Bing, one of our honorary members) on February 12. Phil hopes to entertain in Australia in the near future. He is an accomplished singer and up and coming jazz artist in his late 30s and was only a baby when Bing died. Over the years, Phil has learned how important his grandfather was and he does a tribute to Bing as part of his act.

Phil in action.

John Funnell's "I've Heard That Song Before" from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday on WNY FM 88.9 includes Bing every week and the show can now be heard online at www.wynfm.org.au/. The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" which broadcasts a complete Bing Crosby radio show each week. This is presented by Bob Horsfall. Other radio programmes featuring our man are Peter O'Brien's "Music Showcase" on Eastern FM 98.1 (Mondays 12 noon to 2 p.m.) and in fact Peter featured Bing for a full hour on one of his shows last year. Loris Young's show on 3WBC FM 94.1 (Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) has plenty of Crosby too.

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Joan Fontaine, the Oscar-winning actress who found stardom playing naive wives in Alfred Hitchcock's *Suspicion* and *Rebecca* died on December 15. She was 96. Born Joan de Beauvoir de Havilland in Japan to British parents, she and her older sister Olivia de Havilland moved to California in 1919. It is said that her mother would not let her use the family name so she adopted first Joan Burfield, and later Joan Fontaine. She began her career on the stage in 1935 and signed a contract with RKO Pictures that same year. A number of roles including an important one in the Fred Astaire film *A Damsel in Distress* (1937) gained her an appearance on Bing's *Kraft Music Hall* show on January 20, 1938 but she had to wait until 1939 before she made a real impact in *Gunga Din*.

Bing and the Countess discuss the problems with their dogs in *Emperor Waltz*.

However she was without a studio contract when she was seated next to producer David O. Selznick at a dinner party towards the end of 1939. She impressed him enough to be asked to audition for *Rebecca*, his first movie since *Gone with the Wind* and the American directorial debut of Alfred Hitchcock. Hundreds applied for the lead female role in *Rebecca*, based on Daphne du Maurier's gothic best-seller about haunted Maxim de

Winter and his dead first wife – the title character he obsesses over. With Laurence Olivier as Maxim, Fontaine as the unsuspecting second wife and Judith Anderson as the dastardly housekeeper Mrs. Danvers, *Rebecca* won the Academy Award for best picture and got Fontaine the first of her three Oscar nominations. The following year, she won the Academy Award for Best Actress for Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941) making Fontaine the only actor to ever win an Academy Award in a film directed by Hitchcock. Fontaine and sister de Havilland are the only siblings to have won lead acting Academy Awards.

She starred with Bing in *Emperor Waltz* (1948) as Countess Johanna but complained that Bing was not very courteous to her. She had also moaned about Laurence Olivier being cruel to her whilst making *Rebecca*. In addition, her four marriages all ended in divorce and she is of course known for being a party to one of Hollywood's legendary feuds; that between her and her sister Olivia De Havilland which went right back to their childhood.

Her most daring role came in the 1957 film *Island in the Sun*, in which she had an interracial romance with Harry Belafonte. Several cities in the US south banned the movie after threats from the Ku Klux Klan. Fontaine said she left Hollywood because she was asked to play Elvis Presley's mother. "Not that I had anything against Elvis Presley. But that just wasn't my cup of tea," she said.

In 1965, Fontaine was able to overcome her negative feelings about Bing to appear in the Bing Crosby Show sitcom televised on March 1, 1965 titled "Operation Man Save".

She continued her career in roles on the stage and in radio, television and film until the 1990s. Her autobiography, *No Bed of Roses*, was published in 1978. After a career spanning nearly sixty years, Fontaine made her last on-screen appearance in 1994.

Shirley Temple, the child actress who became one of the most popular movie stars of the 1930s, died at the age of 85 on February 10. She began her film career in 1932 at the age of three, and in 1934, found international fame in *Bright Eyes*, a feature film designed specifically for her talents. She received a special Juvenile Academy Award in February 1935 for her outstanding contribution as a juvenile performer to motion pictures during 1934, and film hits such as *Curly Top* and *Heidi* followed year after year during the mid-to-late 1930s. Licensed merchandise that capitalized on her wholesome image included dolls, dishes, and clothing. Her box office popularity waned as she reached adolescence, and she left the film industry in her teens. She appeared in a few films of varying quality in her mid-to-late teens, and retired completely from films in 1950 at the age of 22. She was the top box-office draw four years in a row (1935–38) in a *Motion Picture Herald* poll.

Temple returned to show business in 1958 with a two-season television anthology series of fairy tale adaptations. She made guest appearances on television shows in the early 1960s and filmed a sitcom pilot that was never released. She sat on the boards of corporations and organizations including The Walt Disney Company, Del Monte Foods, and the National Wildlife Federation. In 1967, she ran unsuccessfully for the United States Congress, and was appointed United States Ambassador to Ghana in 1974 and to Czechoslovakia in 1989.

Bing and Kathryn with Shirley Temple (far right) at the Gala.

Bing and Shirley never worked together in show business but it was in her bid for the United States Congress where their friendship became apparent. On October 23, 1967, Bing presided over a gala entertainment for the "Shirley Temple Black for Congress Committee" at the Thunderbolt Hotel, Millbrae, California. Tickets were $100 each. The reception started at 6:30 p.m. with the dinner commencing at 7:30 p.m. and after the meal, Bing made a short speech to introduce Shirley Temple Black. Shirley ran for Congress against California Representative Pete McCloskey, on a platform of defending America's involvement in the Vietnam War. As we know, she lost but was subsequently appointed by Republicans to several political posts.

Pete Moore, the orchestra leader, who did so much to further Bing's career in the 1970s, died on November 30 at the age of 89. He worked closely with Ken Barnes and Ken has written this tribute.

"In a career spanning six decades, composer-arranger-conductor, Pete Moore's music was and is known to millions the world over, but his name is less familiar to the average person. As a composer, he wrote themes for many TV commercials including such famous brands as Coca Cola and Lux Toilet Soap, numerous songs recorded by such artists as Bing Crosby, Peggy Lee, Frankie Laine and Fred Astaire. But it is his composition "Asteroid" – the famous theme for Pearl and Dean's cinema advertisements – that remains his most familiar and most successful composition. Apart from being heard every day (for the last 45 years) on cinema screens in the U.K., it is constantly featured

around the world in commercials and documentaries. For many people, the very sound of its "pa-papa-pa" fanfare spells "cinema." It has also been "sampled" by modern-day pop artists and enjoyed chart success on more than one occasion.

Pete and Bing work on a song.

But that is only a small portion of a career that saw him providing orchestrations and accompaniments for such artists as Fred Astaire, Bing Crosby, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald, Julie Andrews, Frankie Laine, Rosemary Clooney, Slim Whitman and Randy Crawford – to name but a few. His orchestrations can be found in the repertoires of such world famous musical units as the London Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops and the Rochester Symphony Orchestra – in addition to writing scores for such luminaries as Burt Bacharach, Marvin Hamlisch and Liberace.

A quiet, soft-spoken and unassuming man, cockney-raised and academy-trained, Pete Moore usually declined to do interviews because he was always "too busy." In fact, it would seem that he never actively sought work, it just came to him. Which is why he was often referred to as "The Invisible Genius." As a person and as a musician, he was liked and admired by everyone who knew him. While he may not be a household name, Pete Moore's music remains alive and well. As it has for the past half-century."

Ken Barnes

Ralph Kiner, the legendary Mets broadcaster and Hall of Fame Pittsburgh Pirates player died on February 6 at the age of 91. Ralph was a long-time friend of Bing's who shared a love of baseball and golf. Kiner made his major league debut on April 12, 1946, with the Pittsburgh Pirates, the same year that Bing acquired an interest in the team. The arrival of Hank Greenberg made a huge impact on Kiner because Greenberg gave him hours of instruction, and as a result in 1947, Kiner led the major leagues with 51 home runs while striking out less than 100 times. In 1949 he topped his 1947 total with 54 home runs. It was the highest total in the major leagues from 1939 to 1960, and the highest National League total from 1931 to 1997. It made Kiner the first National League player with two fifty-plus seasons. His string of seasons leading the league in home runs reached seven in 1952, when he hit 37. This also was the last of a record six consecutive seasons in which he led Major League Baseball in home runs. Footage of Kiner hitting a homer in Forbes Field can be seen in the 1951 film *Angels in the Outfield.*

Ralph and Bing discuss the finer points of the game.

On June 4, 1953, Ralph Kiner was sent to the Chicago Cubs as part of a ten-player trade. He played the rest of 1953 and all of 1954 with the Cubs, finishing his career with the Cleveland Indians in 1955. A back injury forced his retirement at the age of 32, with 369 home runs, 1019 runs batted in and a .279 lifetime batting average. He is perhaps best remembered nowadays as an announcer for the New York Mets from the team's inception until his death. Kiner always enlivened their broadcasts with shrewd analysis, amiable storytelling and memorable malapropisms beginning with their woeful first season in 1962.

Sid Caesar, whose clever, anarchic comedy on such programs as "Your Show of Shows" and "Caesar's Hour" helped define the 1950s "Golden Age of Television," passed away on February 12. He was 91. Caesar became famous for "Your Show of Shows," which went on the air in 1950. It lasted four years and was followed by "Caesar's Hour," which combined sketches, musical revues and situation comedy.

Caesar also appeared in a number of films, including "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" (1963), "Airport 1975" (1974) and "Grease" (1978). He received a Tony nomination for his performance in the 1962 show "Little Me," with a book by Simon.

Caesar, born Isaac Sidney Caesar in 1922, was part of a pioneering group of personalities who helped establish television in its early days. However, while comedians such as Jack Benny and Fred Allen more or less transferred their radio shows to the new medium and Milton Berle's "Texaco Star Theater" was essentially vaudeville on the small screen, Caesar's "Show of Shows" presented movie parodies, wordless pantomimes and brisk routines between the host and co-star Imogene Coca.

"Caesar's Hour" left the air in 1957. In the following decades, Caesar appeared in a handful of films, most notably the comic extravaganza "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World," in which he played dentist Melville Crump. He did a number of his own stunt gags and hurt his back in the process. It was in the 1960s that he worked with Bing on four Hollywood Palace shows, with the two of them usually taking part in a sketch together.

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what was happening in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

The Crosby family were now ensconced in the nine-room house at 508 East Sharp Avenue, Spokane, which had been built the previous year. Young Harry (Bing), aged 10, was getting used to his baby brother Bob who had been born on August 25, 1913. Bing was in the sixth grade at Webster School and he appeared in black face in a benefit to raise money for the school. On March 20–21. Al Jolson appeared in the show "The Honeymoon Express" at the Auditorium, Spokane.

75 YEARS AGO

As 1939 opened, Bing began filming *East Side of Heaven* with Joan Blondell, Mischa Auer, Irene Hervey, and C. Aubrey Smith. The film was directed by David Butler with Charles Previn as musical director. This was another independent production in which Bing had a financial interest in 50 percent of the profits. Filming was completed on March 7 and the movie was released through Universal Pictures.

Bing's weekly *Kraft Music Hall* show continued and in addition on January 22, Bing took part in the first "March of Dimes" program. This was radio's contribution to the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis campaign. Eddie Cantor was the host and others appearing were Burns & Allen, Amos 'N' Andy and Connie Boswell.

Paris Honeymoon, starring Bing, had its New York premiere in January as well with some conflicting reviews.

> The Old World charm of Bing Crosby in a ten-gallon hat is the principal Parisian motif in *Paris Honeymoon* which marks a return to the ancient Crosby formula of the days before *Sing You Sinners*. There is something almost engaging however about the conventional Paramount-Crosby plot with its irreducible intellectual content and the way everybody concerned just quietly ignores it, as well-bred people always ignore unpleasant necessities. . . One thing about Bing, you never catch him acting. He is always himself.
> (Bosley Crowther, *New York Times*, January 26, 1939)

> Bing Crosby, back with a bundle of tuneful melodies, nonchalantly meanders through a light romance of the Prince Charming-peasant Cinderella type, displaying a more convincing personality than heretofore. . . . There's a greater ease and assurance displayed by Crosby in his handling of the lead spot than previously. He times his lines better, and gives a corking performance throughout. . . Crosby's four songs are exceptional.
> (*Variety*, December 21, 1938)

with Franciska Gaal in *Paris Honeymoon*.

Before January was out, it was off to Rancho Santa Fee for Bing's annual pro–am tournament which was won by E. J. (Dutch) Harrison. Bob Hope took part for the first time. A lady golfer, Babe Didrikson Zaharias was accepted as a competitor, apparently by mistake, and played as a professional with her wrestler husband as her amateur partner. Mrs. Zaharias was the star of the 1932 summer Olympics in Los Angeles when she won gold medals for the eighty-meters hurdles and the javelin, plus a silver medal for the high jump.

An annual poll of male singers produced another resounding victory for Bing, an annual habit since 1934. The vote on leading male popular singers was:-

1. Bing Crosby 2. Kenny Baker 3. Frank Parker
4. Lanny Ross 5. Nelson Eddy 6. Jerry Cooper
7. Rudy Vallee 8. Buddy Clark 9. Frank Munn
10. Tony Martin 11. Donald Novis

On February 5, Bing starred in the Gulf Screen Guild broadcast with Jane Withers on CBS. Bing sang "This Can't Be Love," "I Have Eyes," and "Small Fry." The Screen Guild Theatre ran on radio from 1939 to 1952 for various sponsors and networks. All fees that would normally have gone to the stars were given to the Motion Picture Relief Fund.

The *Kraft Music Hall* on February 23, 1939 had Henry Fonda as one of the guests. This was the show when The Music Maids took over from the Paul Taylor Choristers as resident vocal group.

> Bing Crosby and his cohorts were in fine fettle (Thursday 23rd), on Kraft's WEAF Music Hall. The hour turned up Henry Fonda who first found himself between Bob Burns and Crosby and a comical sequence based on Fonda's Missouri experiences while making the film, *Jesse James*. The segment, of course, dragged in Burns' Arkansas locale. Second place involved Ellen Drew, featured in a recent Crosby film and pictured Fonda as a bashful hillbilly lover (accent and all), seeking advice from Cupid, assisting Miss Drew. Fonda also toted in his trumpet for a dual session with Burns' bazooka. It sounded like Tin Pan Alley in a full off-key blast and was good for more laughs.
> (*Variety,* March 1, 1939)

On March 4, Bing was at Santa Anita to see his horse "Olimpo" win the 4th. race for 4-year-olds and upwards at long odds. That night there was a gala event at the Biltmore Hotel at which Bing and Bob Hope performed a hilarious "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean" routine.

Bing was busy in March making a number of records such as "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider", "Deep Purple" and "Stardust". The UK's prestigious *Gramophone* magazine was not impressed by one of them.

> One of the records of "Deep Purple" likely to be most in demand is Brunswick 02746. Yes, you have probably guessed to whom I refer—Bing Crosby. This is a very deep purple and maybe it would have sounded more colorful had it been pitched a semitone higher.
> *(The Gramophone*, June 1939)

Press reports in April stated that Bing had had to borrow on his life insurance policy to pay his income tax.

Bing joined Dixie at Estrella Villas, Palm Springs, for Easter and played in a tennis doubles match with Paul Lukas against Ralph Bellamy and Reggie Owen at the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. Afterwards Bing entertained at the club singing many songs and Dixie joined him on stage. Errol Flynn, Charles Farrell, Frank Morgan, and other film stars were also in attendance during the weekend.

> Highlight of the evening, of course, was Bing Crosby, who sang every song request until he was worn out.
> *(The Desert Sun,* April 14, 1939)

Back in Hollywood, Bing commenced filming *The Star Maker* for Paramount on April 17 with Louise Campbell, Ned Sparks, and Linda Ware. The film was directed by Roy Del Ruth with Alfred Newman as musical director. On that same day, Bing found time to take part in the broadcast of the Joe Louis versus Roper fight from Wrigley Field, Los Angeles. Louis knocked Roper out in the first round. Bing was utilized to give details of the many celebrities amongst the 25,000 crowd.

50 YEARS AGO

1964 opened with sad news for Bing and his family. His mother died in a Santa Monica nursing home, nearly aged ninety-one. She had been in a coma for almost three weeks. Apart from her seven children, she left 23 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. She was buried at Holy Cross Cemetery on January 9. In her Will she left Bing $20,000, Larry Crosby $10,000, Bob Crosby $1,000, and Everett and Ted $50 each.

Elsewhere Everett Crosby had his remaining leg amputated in Mount Sinai Hospital. He stayed in the hospital for some months. On a more minor matter, Lindsay Crosby was fined $250 in Palm Springs for reckless driving.

Bing had recorded the first *Hollywood Palace* show at the end of December 1963 and this was aired on January 4. This was the first of his thirty-two appearances on the show which ran until 1970.

Bing sings on the first Hollywood Palace show.

> A briskly paced vaudeville show was unveiled on Saturday evening by the American Broadcasting Company to take the place of the recent Jerry Lewis stage weight. For popular diversion, the hour gives promise of turning out nicely.
>
> The show bears the title of "The Hollywood Palace" and adheres straightforwardly to the tested formula of the two a day. Last night there were clowns for an opener, the main star was penciled in

for next of closing and there was a song fest to empty the studio. The producers, Nick Vanoff and William O. Harbach, displayed their showmanship by engaging some fine acts to bridge the intervals between headliners...

With its chief feature, the show took no chances: it presented Bob Newhart in his wonderful monologue on Sir Walter Raleigh trying to convince his London superior of the uses of tobacco. And Mickey Rooney's vitality stood him in good stead in making the most of his rather thin sketch involving "Candid Camera." Nancy Wilson, Gary Crosby, the Young Americans and Bing Crosby, who doubled as master of ceremonies, completed the roster. The musical aspects of the show, as a matter of fact, were the weakest part of the evening.

But a good augury of the future was the insistence of Mel Feber, the director, that the show keep moving. It looks as if there may be some new competition on the Ed Sullivan level of television.
(Jack Gould, *New York Times*, January 6, 1964)

Meanwhile, Bing had purchased a new home at 101 Robin Road, Hillsborough, near Burlingame, San Francisco and early in January the removal men completed their work.

The last crates of antique furniture, hi-fi sets, family mementos, clothing and 17-year old Scotch were delivered to the Bing Crosby family's new home—a $175,000 mansion, in Hillsborough yesterday. John Scott Trotter, Crosby's musical director for 27 years and an expert on antiques, presided over the last delivery yesterday morning by the Bekins Van & Storage Company. Because of a narrow, winding road leading to the beautiful Tudor-style home, Bekins had to use their "midget" 16-foot vans, the smallest the company has. Trotter, with help from the Crosby's English butler, Alan Fisher, capably directed the moving men, who were led by Bill Simms of Los Angeles and William Snyder of Redwood City. It took eight vans to haul the more than 40,000 pounds of household belongings — including priceless 16th. century antiques, valuable paintings and first editions. Trotter, an ebullient and charming man, fairly hopped with enthusiasm over the house. "It's marvelous, isn't it?" he said repeatedly.
(*San Francisco Chronicle*, January 11, 1964)

Bing and Kathryn moved in to their new home on January 13. Bing joined the Burlingame Country Club and the children all eventually went to North Hillsborough School. Bing accepted the board chairmanship of the Northern California National Bank of San Mateo and he was appointed to the Board of Regents of the Jesuit University of Santa Clara, California.

Then it was down the road a piece for the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Tournament at Pebble Beach which was won by Tony Lema. The weather was again poor with rain, sleet, wind, and fog. Celebrities taking part included Ray Milland, Ray Bolger, John Raitt, Gordon MacRae and Robert Sterling. NBC-TV coverage of the event took place on the afternoons of Saturday and Sunday.

Bing had completed the taping of *The Bing Crosby Show* early in February and it was shown on February 15. The guests were Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bob Hope, Kathryn Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, and Peter Gennaro. John Scott Trotter was the musical director and Nick Vanoff was producer-director. Reviews were not very good.

This one had billing as 'a special' but therein lies a misnomer. There's nothing special about a program, despite illustrious show business names, which lacks both wit and wisdom.....Mrs. Crosby proved to be the hit of the show, being amiable and attractive. Otherwise Crosby's show was a disjointed effort.

While the various players gave a fair account of themselves, mainly via the song and dance material and the quipping clashes between Crosby and Hope, the program itself was devoid of cohesion. It was as if each segment had been filmed on its own and then all the pieces were put together as an afterthought, with continuity not in mind.

Crosby was strong with 'Pennies from Heaven' and 'San Francisco' and he and spouse were fine with the 'Dream' combo but for the rest, well, it was just a lost world....The show was probably okay for the fans but the advertised come-on must have left a number of people unhappy.
(*Variety*, February 19, 1964)

During February, The Beatles flew into New York to appear on the Ed Sullivan show. Their latest record was at number one. Meanwhile, Bing recorded patriotic songs for the album *America, I Hear You Singing* with Frank Sinatra and Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians in Los Angeles for Reprise Records.

This is an impressive gathering of top names for a patriotic paean in a swinging format. Backed by Fred Waring's orch. and chorus, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra singly and in tandem deliver a fine collection of flag-wavers. Crosby takes off on "This Is a Great Country", "This Land Is Your Land" and "A Home in the Meadow." Sinatra effectively handles "The House I Live In", "You're a Lucky Fellow, Mr. Smith" and "Early American." Together they deliver "You Never Had It So Good" and "Let Us Break Bread Together".
(*Variety*, May 9, 1964)

The same month Bing donated $150,000 to Gonzaga for the new Society of Jesus faculty residence and then on March 3 came the surprise announcement that he would appear in a weekly situation comedy television series in the fall for ABC with Beverly Garland as his costar. Each episode had a budget of around $70,000 with Bing himself taking between $15,000 to $20,000 of this. Bing made a point of saying that he would not accept any sponsorship from cigarette companies. In the event, Lever Brothers and Lincoln-Mercury Division became sponsors. It was also noted that Bing had turned down large sums of money to appear in Las Vegas as he

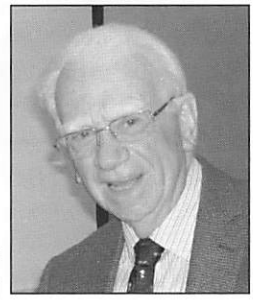
did not want to be linked with gambling.

At Easter, Bing and family again thoroughly cleaned and refurbished the local church at Las Cruces, Mexico. Back in Los Angeles, Bing recorded songs for the Reprise album *Robin and the Seven Hoods* with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr. Nelson Riddle conducted the orchestra.

> A try at a latter-day "Guys and Dolls", *Robin and the Seven Hoods* has a slick set of music and lyrics by Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen, arranged and conducted by Nelson Riddle. With such topflight funsters as Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bing Crosby and Sammy Davis Jr. to warble the songs, this LP looms as a solid contender at the stores and on the air. All of 'em have at least one good number and the overall feel of the session is upbeat. The Warner filmusical will soon be released and it could be a surprise summer winner. The LP has a fine chance on its own.
> (*Variety*, June 24, 1964)

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker looks at the new releases



COMPACT DISCS

Over the last few months we have not been overwhelmed with new issues, whether of CD or DVD. At the time of the Bing Crosby Enterprises - Universal Music Group tie-up we were told that the aspiration was to issue two DVDs and six CDs a year. Leaving aside the re-issue of the former Collector's Choice titles, we have so far had two items - the Johnny Mercer and "Le Bing" CDs, and anxiously await more. Please.

In the meantime hot on the heels of the Armed Forces Radio disc from Sepia (covered in BING #165), we have from a different source -

Bing Crosby A.F.R.S. Basic Music Library Sounds of Yester Year DSOY 942

(Typically £6:50-£7:00 UK, $19-$20 US)

Program 109 (1943-44) - Going My Way / September Song / Dearly Beloved / It Could Happen to You.

Program 195 (ex KMH) (November 1944) - Always (with Eugenie Baird) / Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral / Medley: [One, Two, Button Your Shoe / So Do I / Skeleton in the Closet / Pennies from Heaven (with Eugenie Baird)]

Program 371 (ex KMH) (April–June 1945) - Medley: [The Funny Old Hills / You're a Sweet Little Headache / I Have Eyes] / Medley: [An Apple For the Teacher / Still the Bluebird Sings / A Man and His Dream] / Put Your Arms Around Me Honey / Along the Navajo Trail / San Fernando Valley / Good, Good, Good.

Program 430 (July-September 1943) - People Will Say We're In Love / Nevada / Please / Wait for Me Mary.

Philco Radio Time, Oct. 15th 1947 - Where the Blue of the Night / Kokomo, Indiana / Almost Like Being in Love / I Wish I Didn't Love You So / Your All Time Flop Parade

Bing Crosby A.F.R.S. Basic Music Library Part 2 Sounds of Yester Year DSOY 946

(Typically £6:50-£7:00 UK, $19-$20 US)

Program 452 (Feb-April 1944) - It's Only a Paper Moon / Thanks / Moonlight Bay / Mexicali Rose / Swinging on a Star.

Program 550 (Feb 1946) - In the Land of Beginning Again / Symphony / Aren't You Glad You're You?

Program 552 (Feb-March 1946) - Personality / One More Dream / I'm Always Chasing Rainbows / No Soup (The Charioteers).

Program 600 (April 1946) - Day by Day / All Through the Day / Sioux City Sue / You Are Too Beautiful.

Program 607 (Feb-March 1946) - There's a Small Hotel / Welcome to My Dream / It's Been a Long, Long Time / I Don't Know Enough About You (with Peggy Lee).

Philco Radio Time, December 3rd 1947 - Medley: [Ma Blushin' Rosie / Sunbonnet Sue / A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody (with Al Jolson)] / The Best Things in Life Are Free (with Al Jolson)

The sources for all but the Philco selections are the AFRS transcription discs sent abroad for the local forces

stations to use and the dates shown are the dates of origin of the discs. Note that these are not the same as the various AFRS Broadcasts ("Command Performance", "G.I. Journal" etc.,) but recordings culled from diverse sources whether radio (including rehearsals), commercial recordings and others. The program numbers relate to the transcription discs sent out in packs of five each month. It should be possible to track down the ultimate origin of the items but at present lack of time has prevented me doing this in any detail. Certainly some items are from KMH shows and the medleys particularly are quite readily identifiable.

The Philco tracks in each case are edited versions of the full shows, omitting the commercials and some between-song linkages, managing to cut down the half hour originals to 18 -20 minutes.

The sleeves give slightly incorrect names to some titles, a sign of some carelessness, and the final song on the second disc is not a new track as listed but is tacked on to the preceding medley.

I have a (very slight) reservation about quality because on some tracks the upper strings have a strident and metallic sound. This can be a feature of some radio recordings of the early/mid 1940s, though I think it possible that some emphasis might have been given to the upper frequencies in order to add "life" to the recordings. In totality welcome issues.

Sounds of Yester Year have a further CD scheduled for issue and by the time you read this it should be available. It is called "At His Peak, 1943-1945" but from preliminary information relating to titles and accompanists I believe that the content consists of standard commercial releases.

British Hit Singles January 1940 - December 1949 Official Charts Company GVC 4001

About £10 UK Also available as a download with three extra titles.

Bing's songs are - An Apple for the Teacher / Ciribiribin / If I Had My Way / Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut Street / Maybe / April Played the Fiddle / Meet the Sun Halfway / Only Forever / Mister Meadowlark / Dolores / You and I / The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid / Do You Care? / The Whistler's Mother-In-Law / You Are My Sunshine / Deep in the Heart of Texas / Humpty Dumpty Heart / Be Careful It's My Heart / Moonlight Becomes You / I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes / Be Honest with Me / If I Had My Way / Sunday, Monday or Always / Pistol Packin' Mama / San Fernando Valley / I'll Be Seeing You / Long Ago and Far Away / Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral / Don't Fence Me In / Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive / More and More / You Belong to My Heart / June Comes Around Every Year / On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe / It's Been a Long, Long Time / Sioux City Sue / Day by Day / MacNamara's Band / Temptation / Galway Bay / The Last Mile Home / White Christmas (not on the CDs but included in the download version).

Back in the 1930s and 40s there were no official British record charts. They only started in November 1952. There have been several attempts to recreate what they might have been and different methodologies have produced startlingly different results. The most recent attempt, in a fat and rather expensive book (£30) with a separate but matching set of four CDs, is based on research into the total orders received by manufacturers from record retailers. As we will see, this is important.

Supporting information is totally lacking from the CDs. I hope and assume that the book supplies more but I have not yet seen it. The CDs merely have a listing of title and principal artist. No writers, supporting artists, dates. Nothing! In addition the audio quality is at best mediocre and in some cases downright poor. More effort should have been made to search out clean copies of the records. Many are noisy and "coarse grained", taken from obviously worn copies.

Two 3CD sets issued several years ago employed totally different methods. They were named ***"Britain's First Number Ones" issued by Future Music Ltd*** *and still available at about £8 UK and $15.50 US for Vol. 1 (covering 1939 to 1945), and £10:50 UK and $23 US for Vol. 2 (covering 1945 to 1952). The contrast with "British Hit Singles" is in the method used in the research. The starting point was sheet music sales records for the earlier period, (reported surprisingly enough only in the US trade papers "Variety" and "Billboard"), whilst the later period comes from the air plays at the commercial broadcaster Radio Luxembourg. These sources produced a set of weekly number ones. Bing appears on the following titles -*

(Vol. 1) Only Forever, Deep in the Heart of Texas, The Anniversary Waltz, White Christmas, You Are My Sunshine, Moonlight Becomes You, Don't Fence Me In,

(Vol. 2) It's Been a Long, Long Time, Along the Navajo Trail, A Gal in Calico, People Will Say We're in Love, Galway Bay, Far Away Places.

This is a total of only 13 songs out of 132 titles. These sets have very good supporting notes and the audio quality is much better than for "British Hit Singles". My main reason for covering these is to draw attention to the pure weight of Bing Crosby in the first set – far and away exceeding any combination of competing artists, (and even the combined places of the next seven artists). Out of a total of 104 titles we have no less than 42 from Bing. No one else comes close. Just compare - Bing 42, Frank Sinatra 10, The Ink Spots 9, Al Jolson 6, Vera Lynn 5, Judy Garland 4, Deanna Durbin 3, Nat King Cole 2. Also to note the contrasts in the content between the sets. This seems to me

to point to one thing (and I can think of no other). This is that Bing's sales lasted much longer than many of the other artists - the hits might not have been peaking so high to get to the "Number One" spot so often, but his sales were sustained, resulting in much higher ranking over the longer periods. Note also the overwhelming dominance of American artists. But when looking at the weekly number one spots a very different picture emerges, with greater prominence of such as Vera Lynn, Flanagan and Allen, Anne Shelton, and various British bands. I wonder if the presence in the UK of large numbers of US servicemen might have had any impact on sales during the war years?

Rosemary Clooney - Eight Classic Albums Real Gone Music About £8:80 UK, $18 US
Here on four CDs we have no less than eight of Rosie's classic LPs, on one of which she shares equal honours with Bing. The albums are - "Hollywood's Best" - "Blue Rose" - "Ring Around Rosie" - "Swing Around Rosie" - "Fancy Meeting You Here" - "A Touch of Tabasco" - "Clap, Hands, Here Comes Rosie" - "Rosie Solves The Swinging Riddle". The one of particular interest to us is of course ***"Fancy Meeting You Here"*** *with the full complement of titles from the original LP, but all are top drawer Rosemary. Sound quality is good without being quite equal, in my view, to the Bluebird issue of "Fancy Meeting You Here" from some years ago (which also had some "extras"). Again though we have total disregard to the provision of any meaningful information. If you like the material this does represent a bargain, but expect no supporting detail.*

Bing Crosby At Christmas - Christmas Crooners Complete CD Collection. Promotional Giveaway. Daily Mail (UK)
White Christmas / O Come All Ye Faithful / Silver Bells / Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer *(From Chesterfield December 14, 1949)* / Sleigh Ride / I'll Be Home For Christmas / Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town / Jingle Bells / The First Noel / God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen / Silent Night *(Duet with Lindsay Crosby from Chesterfield December 19, 1951)* / Christmas Medley - Deck the Halls / Away in a Manger / O Little Town of Bethlehem / The First Noel *(from GE December 25, 1952)*
In the UK, towards the end of the year the popular tabloid newspaper the "Daily Mail" produced a number of promotional give away CDs featuring on successive days, Bing, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, Andy Williams, Ella Fitzgerald and Perry Como, all singing Christmas songs. Bing must still have pulling power in the eyes of the popular press. Long may it continue! I find it interesting that such a source went outside the general run of commercial issues to find some radio material.

DVD and Blu-ray

Hollywood Palace Christmas Special - Synergy Entertainment
$9:99 US (also available in US from Amazon Instant Video)
Format: NTSC, All Regions, 60 minutes B&W.
There is quite a bit of criticism of this DVD on the US Amazon website, centering around the fact that it was not the show that was expected, with one person complaining that David Bowie is not in it! Well Bowie was in the 1977 special, and Bing did make a fair number of TV shows, and quite a few Christmas specials. But I can understand the basis of the complaint - this one is headlined as being from 1962 but I think it is in fact from 1966! Participants include Kate Smith. The real oddity is that it was made in colour, yet here it is in not terribly glorious black and white.

On The Net.

Last year at the Leeds conference, Malcolm Macfarlane gave a presentation about Bing's films "A Night at the Movies" which had been compiled by John Marshall. It is fascinating and informative and included not only stills from the films, but copies of news items and reviews from the time of making and release. That presentation in amended form has been placed online. But John has now gone much further and extended his work into "The Written Word", displaying magazine and newspaper articles covering the whole of Bing's career. These include reviews of films, records, radio and TV, general news items, and items about the family. John is rapidly developing things on his site and it is well worth investigating and revisiting. To see all these items originally you would have needed subscriptions to 101 journals (maybe more) or be a member of an extremely well stocked international library. Initially this was mounted on my "Crosby Fan World" site but John now has a site of his own named "Footloose" and both "A Night at the Movies" and "The Written Word" are at http://www.johncmarshall.co.uk/

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